

ARK THE LEGEND

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ROK GAME FANTASY STORY

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ROK
MECHA

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Ark's 24 Hours

‘This really.....’

Lee Myung-ryong scratched his head. As a brief background, Lee Myung-ryong was the leader of the 1st SWAT team and receive various commendations for solving cases. He was quite famous among criminals. Then there was an event that caused friction with a senior police officer and he was transferred to the cyber investigations team. But Lee Myung-ryong diligently worked hard and used his exceptional skills to capture an illegal criminal organization operating in a virtual reality game. Currently Lee Myung-ryong was overseeing a cyber investigation team. However his opinion often differed from his superior Cho Young-hwan.

“What are you thinking?”

Cho Young-hwan yelled as soon as Lee Myung-ryong entered his office

“Ah really. Why does your face look like this in the morning? Are you fighting with sister-in-law again? That’s not good. You can’t reprimand your subordinates just because your home life isn’t good.”

“Don’t talk and sit down. What did you do?”

“What did I do? Working hard?”

“Are you really going to act like this?”

“What do you mean? Am I a psychic? How can I answer when I don’t even know what you’re talking about? I don’t know.”

Lee Myung-ryong pouted like a child and said. Cho Young-hwan frowned as he looked at Lee Myung-ryong and sighed.

“The NIS called.”

“The NIS? For me? Why?”

“I’m asking because I don’t know! You, are you really not hiding something from me? If you know then confess now. Do you think it is common for the NIS to call the police? If I don’t know then how can I deal with it?”

“I don’t know.”

“Then why is the NIS calling for you all of a sudden?”

“I don’t know.”

Lee Myung-ryong replied in a disinterested voice. But he was reminded of something. A month ago he had received a request from Gwon Hwa-rang. The land in the Taek Mountains where a new town construction had been planned suddenly had its price plunged. Gwon Hwa-rang found that powerful politicians and tycoons were behind it and asked Lee Myung-ryong to investigate. Lee Myung-ryong had quietly asked some colleagues for help and now he received a call from the NIS. This couldn’t be a coincidence. The NIS was a powerful organization. This call was obviously related to that work.

‘First they roll over a civilian and now they’re planning to do it to a police officer? There seems to be something smelly. I want to hear what they have to say.’

Lee Myung-ryong headed to the NIS. He explained his request to a guide and a man appeared.

“Are you Lee Myung-ryong from the Gangnam cyber investigations team? I am the assistant manager Kang Ho-cheol. My supervisor is Chief Moon Ji-hun. But the Chief was called to an emergency meeting just now. It will take some time.”

“You want me to wait until then?”

“I’m sorry. The matter is.....”

Unlike his words, there was no sign of an apology on Kang Ho-cheol's face. It wasn't anything new. The NIS investigated cases related to national security and separate investigations. Therefore the NIS tended to consist of elites that looked down on the police.

'It isn't anything new but.....'

He didn't like being treated like this. Kang Ho-cheol noticed his unpleasant expression and started to talk again.

"Is this your first visit to the NIS?"

"Yes."

"Then I will give you a tour of the facilities. You will be spending a lot of time here so you should get to know this place better. This was the Chief's instructions."

"Spending a lot of time here? What do you mean?"

"The Chief will explain the details. Follow me."

'These bastards, what mischief are they plotting?'

But Lee Myung-ryong didn't worry about it too deeply. The answer wouldn't appear even if he thought about it so he would just take it step by step. He would meet that guy called Chief Moon. And he would see what the NIS wanted. That was Lee Myung-ryong's way. Just as Lee Myung-ryong was thinking this.

"I heard that you've mastered taekwondo. Are you still training?"

"Yes, well....."

"Then you must be interested in the sport facilities."

"Yes, well....."

"That's great. The Chief instructed me to show you around but aren't all government offices the same? This is the dining room. Meat dishes will be

served three times a week. These are the lodgings. The cushion beds are okay? And this is the gym.”

Lee Myung-ryong was shown around but he had no interest in things like offices. But he was interested in the gym. The NIS was a place where Korea’s elites gathered. He was curious about the martial arts ability of the NIS employees. But Lee Myung-ryong was disappointed when he arrived at the gym. It might have state of the art equipment that was better than the police department’s but there was no one there exercising. Then Kang Ho-cheol sent him a coy look.

“Do you want to try it?”

“Yes, well.....eh?” Huh?”

“Actually I asked Chief Moon about your history. You’re now in the cyber investigations team but you used to be the leader of the 1st SWAT team. Doesn’t that mean you’re one of the best at fighting? Isn’t it uncommon to meet a person like that? I want to be taught martial arts from someone famous like you. It will also kill some time. How about it?”

“No, I’m not that great.....”

Lee Myung-ryong said with a frustrated expression. In fact, Lee Myung-ryong was someone who liked sparring. That’s why he operated until the belief that ‘they’re a criminal so it is possible to beat them up.’ But he had spent the last year in a virtual reality game. Well he could fight in the virtual reality game so he had no complaints.

‘However it is different from an actual fight!’

The employees of the NIS were the best in the nation. Yet he suddenly had this request sprung on him!

“It’s fine if it is just a light spar.”

“Thank you.”

And 10 minutes later. The leader of a cyber investigation team and an employee of the NIS stood facing each other in the gym wearing sparring uniforms.

“Now, I’ll start first.”

Kang Ho-cheol was the one who moved first. He did a sharp, front kick as soon as his words ended. Lee Myung-ryong could measure his opponent’s skill with just that kick. He could see that there was a solid base. However there was no threatening feeling. Kang Ho-cheol wasn’t lacking in ability. This spar was strictly to gauge each other’s skills. It wasn’t an actual fight so there was no tension and they adjusted their power not to injure his opponent. Despite that, it was possible for Lee Myung-ryong to grasp the ability of Kang Ho-cheol.

‘He has considerable skills. A criminal won’t be a match for him. This is a light spar but I can’t be careless or else I will humiliate myself.’

The situation suddenly changed. Lee Myung-ryong had been blocking Kang Ho-cheol. Suddenly Kang Ho-cheol stretched out his arm and elbowed Lee Myung-ryong in the forehead. An elbow attack was dangerous so they were banned in mixed martial arts fights. He never imagined that elbows would be used in a spar. He hastily retreated from the attack and touched his forehead with his hand. The area grazed by the elbow was red.

“Hik! I-I’m sorry. That reminds me, wasn’t this a light taekwondo spar? The martial arts taught at the NIS is a little different from that of the police. The NIS’ special missions often turn violent so we learn taekwondo that is more on the radical side. It is a habit to use my elbow. Did you get hurt?”

“It doesn’t hurt but.....”

“I’m glad. Maybe it is better to stop the spar now. Like I said, the martial arts I learn is a little extreme. I’m being cautious but if I make another mistake and injure you then I’ll be in trouble.”

‘Aha! So it is something like this.’

An ‘!’ popped into Lee Myung-ryong’s head. Kang Ho-cheol told him to wait several hours then suddenly wanted to spar. It was clearly some type of mischief that Moon Ji-hun put him up to. Perhaps Moon Ji-hun called him in because he sensed that Lee Myung-ryong was prying into the politicians and tycoons. And the NIS was trying to scare a simple police officer. However, the opponent was Lee Myung-ryong. The NIS probably investigated Lee Myung-ryong’s background. He had a reputation as a loud and stupid detective and he clashed with a previous police chief. A man like that wouldn’t retreat so easily. So they probably planned to beat down Lee Myung-ryong with the spar.

‘Does the NIS think that lightly of the police?’

In fact, this was a system that Lee Myung-ryong often used. He would just method to train a rookie detective. Therefore Lee Myung-ryong knew what Kang Ho-cheol was planning.

‘So you want to die?’

A shallow smile spread on Lee Myung-ryong’s face. Then a man watching from a corner of the gym on the second floor also smiled.

“As expected.”

The man muttering in a low voice was Moon Ji-hun. Lee Myung-ryong’s guess was almost the right answer. In fact, Mon Ji-hun brought him to the NIS for a different reason. Not long ago Moon Ji-hun received an order from the Emergency Planning Department about incorporating some special advisors. The NIS was in a position where he had to accept a mere policeman as an advisor. This was humiliating for Moon Ji-hun. However Lee Myung-ryong’s admission had already been decided by the ‘top.’ He had to accept it.

‘But it is different if the person concerned is involved in an accident. For example, a situation where he needs two month administrative leave to

recover from injuries obtained in a spar.'

And Kang Ho-cheol had the skills to cause such an accident. He introduced himself as Moon Ji-hun's assistant but his actual title was the NIS field agent's martial arts instructor. Lee Myung-ryong might know martial arts but he would be no match. The problem was whether he accepted the spar. Lee Myung-ryong might back down if he became too scared.

'Well, it's not that bad. Someone like that can't join the Lucifer Hunting team. But it looks like there was no need to worry. I know guys like Lee Myung-ryong. His ego just needs to be poked and.....'

"Aren't these accidents common in sparring? I can't be a police officer if I'm scared of this much."

"You want to continue?"

"Of course."

"You might really get hurt....."

"I don't mind. Isn't this a spar?"

Lee Myung-ryong shook out his arms and legs and replied.

'Of course he would continue.'

Moon Ji-hun smiled as he looked over the two of them. His answer was expected. However Moon Ji-hun had overlooked one important thing. It was.....

"No, I won't go easy on you. Isn't it good if we both don't have to hold back? Let's give it everything we've got even if there are injuries."

His name was Lee Myung-ryong. He was the best and worst policeman in Korea.

“Give me an answer!”

The square in front of S-20’s administrative office. Hundreds of people swarmed and created a nasty atmosphere.

“My shop was completely smashed by the airship. The equipment in my trailer has been turned to scrap iron. How are you going to take responsibility for this?”

“We are aware of the situation and the damage. Please calm down a bit.....”

“How do you expect us to calm down?”

“The smashed trailer is my entire fortune!”

“I paid taxes to trade in this sector so I expect a guarantee of safety. The administrator is obliged to protect my property. Does it make sense that you’re pretending ignorance?”

The merchants cried out in upset voices. The reason for their resentment was the airship crash that occurred a few hours ago. An airship had crashed into the middle of S-20 out of the blue! Two stores in the centre were completely smashed while the four surrounding stores were affected as well. It was impossible for the store owners to not be upset. They weren’t the only ones complaining.

“How are you going to handle the PK?”

“We’re similar to the merchants. We paid money to enter the dungeons. Now we can’t even hunt the monsters in the dungeon without being affected by PKing? If there is going to be PK then reduce the sector and dungeon fee!”

“Our party had to pay 3 gold to access the dungeon. Yet we were killed after 30 minutes!”

“Is anything installed in the dungeon to prevent chaotic people?”

“Either install it straight away or refund my fee!”

They were victims of successive PKing occurring in the dungeon. Mellin and Hegel tried to calm them down but the complaints showed no signs of declining. More victims of the incidents kept on showing up. And they hadn't taken any measures to prevent it. They couldn't properly respond to the complaints so the victims became even more furious. And just as they were on the verge of an explosion!

Woong woong woong!

There was a storm in the calm sky. Clouds scatted because of an unseen force and one spaceship appeared. The sleek, streamlined body reflecting light like a mirror was the Silver Star!

“H-he came!”

“Hyung-nim is back!”

Mellin and Hegel's expression brightened. They ran to the Silver Star and bombarded Ark with questions.

“Ark, yes, how did things go?”

“Is there another answer?”

But Ark didn't answer. Ark's eyes turned towards the people gathered in front of the office. He could tell why they were there just because of his expression. They were the disgruntled people who were injured in the series of incidents. One guy headed towards Ark and said.

“You came Ark-nim! We.....”

Ark raised his hand and nodded.

“I know what you're about to say. As the administrator of S-20, I want to apologize to all victims affected by the incidents.”

“That isn't what we want to hear!”

“Yes, we.....”

“I already know. Compensation.”

Ark once again interrupted their words.

“I’ve taken that into account. But as you know, it has been less than a day since the incidents occurred. I need time to understand the sequence of events. Therefore I need time to prepare countermeasures.”

“But.....”

“Instead I will promise one thing.”

Ark gave the pioneers a serious look and said.

“S-20 is my sector. If you have suffered from incidents in S-20 then of course I will take responsibility. I have no intention of evading that responsibility. I swear you will be compensated for any damage. In the worst case I’ll even sell S-20!”

“Hyung-nim!”

Mellin and Hegel exclaimed with surprise. But Ark just lifted an eyebrow and continued speaking.

“Once again, I am the administrator of S-20. I’m not going to flee. Like I said, I’ll be happy to provide compensation. So please believe in me for a few days.”

“Well, if you say so.....”

The gathered pioneers scratched their heads. It was hard to keep being furious with Ark’s promise of compensation.

“I’ll say one thing. The incident with the airship and PKing wasn’t Ark-nim’s fault. But Ark-nim is the sector administrator and you’ve received the most damage. Now you’re shouldering the responsibility and promising compensation as well? In this situation we shouldn’t put too much pressure on Ark.”

“I also have the same idea.”

They were his acquaintances Shein and Kuma.

“Me too. My trailer has already been damaged by the airship crash so what else can I do? The administrator promised to shoulder responsibility so I’ll wait a bit more.”

The NPC merchant Gid also helped out with his words. The pioneers making complaints started dispersing. The Royal Guards sighed with relief and looked at Ark.

“Phew. Now I can breathe for a bit.”

“Hyung-nim came back just in time.”

“Yes, the atmosphere seemed like they were going to riot.”

The Royal Guards’ expression became lighter as they talked. But Ark didn’t answer. Ark sat at the desk with a heavy expression and asked Mellin.

“Has Rapid come back yet?”

“No, I have not seen him.”

“This is.....”

Ark murmured with a sigh. Mellin noticed Ark’s attitude and asked in a concerned voice.

“It didn’t go well?”

Ark silently nodded. Once again, Marquis Jyubel and the Laius company were behind the events in S-20. Multiple events occurred simultaneously so the first person who popped into Ark’s head was Marquis Martin.

-Those damn bastards want to play like this huh? Okay, if you want a fight then I’ll give you one. You’re mistaken if you think this much will scare me off. If they come this way then I will smash the minster of domestic affairs or the 4 large companies!

That's what he said but.....

-The sudden command to install facilities by the central government.

-The continuous PK cases in Mt. Fargo that occurred a few days ago.

-The channel linking the lake and centre being block by the research centre being built.

-The Laius group drilling a tunnel to the dungeon and not charging any fees.

-A airship damaging 4 stores with a crash.

Incidents occurred one after another! Ark was honestly confused about how to clean it all up. Furthermore his opponents were the minister of Domestic Affairs and one of the largest companies on Istana. There was no guarantee what else they might've planned.

'I have to mobilize all the means available to me!'

So Ark went straight to Marquis Martin.....

"I already know."

Martin Marquis said as soon as he saw Ark.

"I've received a report about S-20 from my adjutant. I knew Jyubel and the Laius company would cause trouble one day but I didn't expect it would turn out like this."

"Is there a way to resolve it?"

"To tell you the truth....."

Marquis Martin paused and sighed before continuing.

"Right now there is nothing I can do to help the situation."

“Nothing?”

“Yes, the auditor’s words were true. The incident in Charem was caused by an unidentified virus that cause Sufferers and the Parliament received a report about the bio hazard risks. In order to prevent the recurrence of an incident like this, a bill was created that required disaster prevention facilities to be installed in all cities and sectors. That bill was approved by Parliament a few days ago. It isn’t just S-20 but all sectors in Istana who have to comply. I can’t give S-20 preferential treatment in a situation like this.”

Ark felt breathless as his jaw dropped. Right now S-20 had several problems but the most important one was the <Audit Command> quest. The other problems were simply damage inflicted to S-20 but if he couldn’t complete the <Audit Command> quest in the time period then he would lose his administrator license. Then the solution was simple.

If he installed the security, disaster prevention and sanitary facilities then it would be okay. But like always, the problem was money. Safety equipment were things like a shield or automatic turrets surrounding the sector. After receiving the audit command, Tori did some calculations and the amount required to install those facilities was at least 20,000 gold! Combined with the disaster and sanitary equipment, that was a total of 30,000 gold! Ark didn’t have that kind of money.

‘But.....’

There was a way to obtain some money. The airship that crashed into S-20. Two stores in the centre were completely smashed while the four surrounding stores were affected as well. The airship had the mark of the Laius company on it! Therefore Ark had the right to ask for compensation from Laius.

‘The scale of damage isn’t small so I can receive a considerable amount of compensation. I can use the compensation to pay for the facilities and avoid disaster. I’m sorry for the merchants who received damage but my priority is to protect the sector. I can pay the merchants interest until the sector has

stabilized.’

This was the reason Ark came to visit Marquis Martin. He received the <Audit Command> quest. And Marquis Martin was a high ranking noble. He hadn’t expected him to cancel the quest. However the compensation was a different matter. The Laius company was aiming for S-20. Whether the crash incident was accidental or not, he could ask for compensation. He wanted to receive the compensation so he could complete the <Audit Command> quest in time. Marquis Martin could make that happen.

.....That’s what he thought.

“I can’t do that.”

“What do you mean?”

“Do you really think the airship crash occurred by accident?”

“Is it important whether it was an accident or not?”

“No, it is very important.”

Marquis Martin clicked his tongue and continued talking.

“Have you considered that the Laius group deliberately caused the accident?”

“You mean.....?”

“According to my research, the Laius group had reported that airship stolen a few days ago. It is clear that the airship belongs to the Laius group. But all of their airships are covered by insurance. Therefore all damages caused by the airship must occur through the insurance company.”

“Won’t I still receive a compensation?”

“Maybe someday.”

“Someday?”

“The insurance company has raised an objection to this accident. The airship that crashed into S-20 was just about to be disposed of. Therefore the

insurance company believes the thief deliberately stole it for the insurance payout and won't give the payout until their investigation ends. And the Laius company accepted it."

"That....."

"All of Laius' airships are insured with the Trial insurance company. And Trial was a subsidiary of Laius a few years ago. Do I need to explain more?"

From the beginning it was all planned out. Reporting it as stolen, the crash and the postponement of the insurance payout. And the postponed payouts included S-20's compensation. It was clear when looking at the situation. Trial intended to quarrel with the Laius company over the insurance payout. This would last until Ark was stripped of the administrator position.

"You know....."

"Yes, this isn't a problem that Marquis Martin can solve."

"The same goes for your other problems. The federation has an obligation to protect the sector. You manage the dungeon but the dungeon isn't technically part of your sector. So the federal army can't intervene if the murderers are going around in the dungeon. And the Laius group is constructing outside the sector so legally there isn't a problem."

In the end he wasn't able to give any help. Marquis Martin was the military advisor and a powerful noble in the federation. But he wasn't capable of everything. Especially since Jyubel had an equal status with him. Marquis Jyubel was the minister of Domestic Affairs. He had a stronger influence on domestic affairs while Marquis Martin had more influence in military matters.

"Ark."

Then Martin Marquis spoke again.

"I've helped you several times. Perhaps Jyubel didn't like that which is why

he is acting this time. That's why I can't do anything. Do you understand what I'm saying?"

"He expects you to understand while we're dying?"

Berad became furious after hearing Ark's explanation.

"In the end he is just pretending ignorance!"

"This is why we shouldn't believe in the nobility. Dammit! Didn't we go back to the battlefield because he needed us?"

"Next time I'll smash his head in!"

The Royal Guards exclaimed in rough voices.

"That's not what he means."

Ark shook his head.

"It's not that Marquis Martin won't help. He can't help."

"Eh? What's that? That's the same thing."

"It is very different."

Ark replied in a calm voice. In the end Marquis Martin couldn't help so visiting him was pointless. But he could regain his calm because of his conversation with the Marquis. Ark had been in an excited state when visiting him. The <Audit Command> had been followed by one incident after another. He knew that Jyubel and the Laius group were aiming for S-20 so he had no choice but to be worked up. Therefore he couldn't see the situation correctly. Marquis Martin calmed him down.

"Jyubel and the Laius group planned this. They wouldn't leave such an easy loophole. It was stupid to expect a reward from the airship crash. But Marquis Martin did help in some way. I couldn't receive help from him but I could

figure out the situation.”

Needless to say, the Laius company’s purpose was S-20. However Jyubel’s purpose wasn’t S-20. Why would the minister of domestic affairs care about an underdeveloped sector? He might be helping the Laius company but that isn’t his purpose. Jyubel’s target was Marquis Martin. That’s why Marquis Martin stressed that he couldn’t get involved. He had prepared a small trap for Marquis Martin and now he was in a corner. This was the reason Marquis Martin couldn’t help. If he interfered then Jyubel might make things even worse. Mellin shook his head and sighed again at Ark’s explanation.

“In the end we’re like shrimps caught in a war between whales.”

It was an accurate representation. That was Ark’s current situation.

“But I’m not a shrimp.”

Ark raised his head after a moment and said.

“I’m not going to give up until the end.”

“What do you mean? Did you find a way?”

“Then did you want to give up?”

“No, that’s not.....thousands of gold is needed in order to install those facilities. There is also a time limit so we need to start construction immediately. How are we going to get that type of money?”

“However we can’t give up!”

Berad struck the desk and stood up. The other members also got up and shouted.

“Yes! S-20 is our land! This is the land that Hyung-nim obtained after becoming bloody on the battlefield! Why do we have to give up such a land?”

“That’s right! Besides, we haven’t seen the sun for a month because we were

digging! I'm not going to give it to someone else! There is no way!"

"I would rather carry a bomb to plunge into that research centre!"

"That would be a problem."

Ark said with a smile.

"The sector's only hope is that research centre."

"The research centre? What do you mean?"

Mellin asked with confusion at the mention of the research centre. If he could explain, most facilities were moved inside blocks that could be easily assembled. As long as there was sufficient equipment and manpower, the building could be completed in a few days. If Laius poured a considerable amount of money into it then it could be completed in one day. Near the sector office was a state of the art research centre with the latest facilities.

"What is the Laius company's purpose?"

"Isn't it S-20?"

"Indeed."

Ark then shouted to Tori.

"Tori, can you confirm what type of facilities are in that building?"

"Huh? Yes! I just need to look at the connected blocks and I can determine it. I can't see any high performance antennas but there are built in automatic turrets and a shield generator. Doesn't it seem more like a fortress than a laboratory?"

"That's more solid evidence."

Ark grinned and nodded.

"In other words those facilities are being stored in the research centre. It is like that. They might've created that building to pressure us but it isn't the only reason. Perhaps the real purpose of that building is sector management.

They intend to use that building for management when they drive us out of S-20. Now, that raises one question. Why would they make the management office right outside the sector boundary?”

“B-because they can’t build inside the sector.....”

“Then what if they obtain sector S-20?”

“Then.....”

Mellin lifted his head with a dumbstruck expression. He had finally reached the same conclusion as Ark.

“Extension.”

That word fell from Mellin’s mouth. Ark manipulated his Nymphe and the information window floated in the air.

<Public facilities able to be installed in a level 1 sector>

Extension (5,000 G): Extend the range of the sector by 1 square kilometres.

Fairy (3,000 G): A Fairy can be installed for pioneers to resurrect at.

Exclusive Route (2,000 G): The sector can be added to the transport route that the federation operates.

Relay Antenna (1,000 G): A large volume relay antenna can be installed in the sector. When the antenna is installed, it is possible to make contact with other cities on Istana and users can receive mail from other colleagues.

It was the information window stating all the public facilities that could be installed in a sector! Originally Ark had been trying to install the Fairy and exclusive route in S-20. But what was the use if his administrator license flew away? He had forgotten about the public facilities after all the incidents until the conversation about insurance with Marquis Martin.

“The administrator of S-20 is still me.”

Ark said with a smile.

“I can give permission to expand the sector.”

If Ark extended the boundaries of the sector then the laboratory right next to the boundary would be included in the sector’s sphere of influence. This didn’t mean that the research centre would belong to Ark. But it didn’t matter who owned the research centre. The important thing was that a building equipped with all the facilities required by the auditor was within S-20.

“But if those guys destroy the institute.....”

“Who will let them?”

Ark said with a smirk.

“That building might belong to Laius but it will be in my area of administration. They can’t do anything without my permission once the extension happens. The ground that building is on will belong to me. I can forcefully evict anyone who build on my land without permission or they will have to pay me a building permit.”

Marquis Martin had already given Ark legal advice about this. The result was no problem!

‘This is it! An eye for an eye! Law against law!’

This was the solution Ark came up with to reverse the situation.

“Two conditions are required for this plan to be successful. One is to raise the funds required for extension and the other is to complete the extension without them noticing. If they know then they might demolish the building before we collect the funds needed for the extension.”

“I see what you mean.”

“Tomorrow I will be eligible to apply for public facilities. I have to secure the

funds before then.”

The necessary funds was 5,000 gold. That was far less than the amount required to equip security and sanitary facilities. But that didn't mean it was easy to gather.

‘I don't have good news.....’

He had been saving money to apply for a Fairy and exclusive route. Despite collecting the proceeds from the sector, Ark only had 1,000 gold. However Ark had tons of expensive metal parts from Amara. The Royal Guards also obtained a significant amount of gallstones from spending one month in the dungeon. And in the last few days, Ark had been wandering the dungeons and collecting loot!

‘There's no time left. I have to sell everything I can!’

But he couldn't sell at S-20. Ark's plan would be wasted if Bain noticed. Furthermore, S-20 contained lots of gallstones. It would be hard to get a good price for the gallstones if he sold it here. Therefore Ark flew to Charem using the Silver Star to dispose of the goods. It wasn't easy to dispose of the goods for an expensive price in a limited amount of time. He ran around the stores trying to haggle for even 1 more copper. Thanks to that, Ark sold all the items for a high price than he imagined and gathered 4,500 gold. Yet he was still lacking 500 gold.

‘I can't sell anything else. But.....’

Ark still had one place where he could gain money. It was the octopuses' food production factory right next to Charem! When it was created then the profits for one day was 14 gold and 40 silver. But now the revenue had gone above 20 gold a day. While Ark was absent, Jay mix the fish paste bar with various spices to develop premium goods. The profit increased by 50%. So the money earned in a fortnight since last month was 900 gold! Ark would receive 30% of the income so that was 270 gold.

–Of course we will help you in such a matter!

Bakum handed over the money gathered in the meantime after hearing Ark's circumstances. His total was 5,400 gold! Finally he reached his goal.

“Thank you. I will pay back this money as soon as the situation in the sector is cleaned up. Jay, good work. I don't have time for a detailed explanation right now but I'll come back.”

Ark headed straight to S-20 again. And he was sure of his victory when he landed in S-20's airfield.

Kukung! Kukung! Kukung!

The Laius company was still constructing its building. Bain hadn't noticed Ark's plan. Now the time remaining before he could apply for a public facility was 30 minutes. They couldn't demolish the lab in 30 minutes even if they noticed! If he could apply for a sector extension after 30 minutes then all his problems would be resolved.

‘That's it. This time I won!’

Ark gave a smile of satisfaction as he looked at the research centre.

“Why, are you envious?”

One man approached from the other side of the fence. He was Bain, the director sent by the Laius company. Bain just laughed and began to talk.

“I heard that Ark-nim has a lot of complex issues in your sector these days.”

“Thanks to you.”

“I don't know what you mean. Haven't you discovered it already? The airship that crashed has the Laius logo but it was stolen a while ago. I was surprised myself to see it crash into S-20. Well, I'm sure I wasn't as surprised as Ark-nim. The Laius company is personally investigating it. I heard the insurance company might endlessly delay the insurance payments so will you be able to endure the merchants' complaints?”

“Is that a problem for you to worry about?”

“That might be so but.....”

Bain laughed and continued.

“Why don’t you give up and return to the city?”

“What?”

“The equipment you need to satisfy the central government costs tens of thousands of gold. I’ve seen you flying off in the airship to try and gather money but I don’t think Ark-nim can gain this type of money in a fortnight. In the end Ark-nim will just become penniless. So I’ll make a proposal. Ark-nim already knows what the Laius company desires. So let’s not waste time and put this in order. It won’t end up good for Ark-nim if you endure. If you transfer the rights to the sector to us then we will pay you 1,000 gold.”

“Do you think I’ll accept a suggestion like that?”

“Aren’t you going to regret it?”

“Let’s see? In the future I know who will regret it.”

Ark replied to Bain.

“Ark, it is a big deal!”

A voice screamed from behind him. He looked back and saw Mellin running with a frantic face.

“The murders! Murders in the dungeon! This time there are hundreds of incidents! Right now the dungeon is a sea of blood! There is an outpouring of complaints by the pioneers! And hundreds of pioneers have left the sector!”

“W-what?”

Ark felt like he had been hit in the back of the head. So far only 3~4 people had been PKed in the dungeon at a time. That was equivalent to one party. Therefore Ark thought that the Laius company had hired several

pioneers to infiltrate and commit PK. But suddenly hundreds of people were struck at once? That meant there were several times the number of assassins hiding in the dungeon. It meant the other assassins had been hiding. So far only occasional parties had been struck by PK. The rest had been hiding. Now those guys all revealed themselves and murdered hundreds of people at once.

‘Don’t tell me?’

Ark hurriedly manipulated his Nymph. And his heart fell as he saw the sector management window.

-The current population had fallen below 2000!

You need to keep the population at more than 2,000 for a week in order to apply for public facilities. If you gather the population again then you need to maintain it for another week.

“U-unbelievable!”

Those guys had been aiming for this! S-20’s population had steadily increased to over 2,500. Even with all the incidents, the population had stayed at 2,300 people. Therefore Ark hadn’t worried about the population. The population had only decreased a little bit so he didn’t think it would fall beneath 2,000 in one day. That was a trap. Those guys were ready to decrease the population to less than 2,000 at any time. And they had waited for him. In other words.....

“You!”

Ark turned and shouted. Bain just laughed and said.

“Heh, you’ve finally grasped the situation. I said you would be sorry if you didn’t accept my advice. The Laius company has managed more than 10 sectors on Istana. Do you think we wouldn’t have expected Ark-nim’s plan?”

“You.....!”

“There will be a problem if you continue being difficult. I’ll simply say this. I don’t have any relationship with those murderers. But who knows what will happen in the future. The murders of pioneers in the dungeon will probably continue. So it will be difficult for you to increase the population. Ark-nim’s plan has no possibility of working.”

Bain paused and continued.

“Now it is impossible to buy this sector for 1,000 gold. My offer is 500 gold. If you’re smart then you will decide quickly. The value will continue to go down.....”

The Best Hunting Ground

“Hah.....”

Ark sighed. He had been on the verge of applying for an extension when there was a mass case of PK! This unprecedented event was definitely a fatal blow to Ark. So far he had identified the death toll at 230 people! But the problem wasn't the deaths. The incident happened in just 30 minutes. The fact that there were 230 deaths in such a short time meant that the Larius company had a minimum of 100 people hidden in the dungeon. They also had to have considerable levels and skills to PK the users hunting in Mt. Fargo. More than 100 chaotic people had infested the dungeon.

“Damn, how can we hunt in a place like this?”

“Does it make sense to pay for a dungeon infested with chaotic people?”

“Isn't the sector manager going to solve this problem?”

“Allowing chaotic people in the first place is inconceivable!”

The users' complaints were directed at Ark. Strictly speaking, it was Ark's responsibility. There were ways to hide an identity in Galaxian. There were even items that make noise to prevent the opponent from figuring out their personal information. If the Hyde Helmet was used then even the appearance could be changed. Therefore most cities and sectors had devices installed at the entrance to detect those types of items and skills like 'stealth.' But Ark was poor.

He had been saving all his money to install the Fairy and exclusive route. But that meant he couldn't install the search device. The boundary of S-20 was only marked with a fence and rubble. In addition, Ark only had 10 people to maintain the boundary. If someone wanted to sneak in then it was easy. The auditor was correct when he pointed out that S-20's security was low. He didn't even have the minimal amount of equipment to stop a situation.

‘Those guys aren’t hiding in that way.....’

Even if there were no security facilities, there were the eyes of many pioneers in the dungeon. There had to be a way to hide 100 chaotic people in the dungeon. Perhaps they were in a normal state before entering the dungeon. In any case, the damage was huge. Many users in the same party had died. If they were normal before PKing then there would be no way to filter them out even if he had search devices. But that wasn’t an excuse. He couldn’t avoid receiving the blame so he took the dungeon entrance fees.

‘It’s fine if they blame me. The problem is that there is no way to resolve this situation.’

This was the reason for Ark’s sigh. Usually a sector would request intervention from the federation in cases like this. However the range of S-20 was up to the entrance of the dungeon. They had to pass through S-20 to do to the dungeon so the users paid a separate admission fee. But the dungeon itself wasn’t owned by Ark. In other words, it was no different from the Outlands. That’s why he couldn’t stop Bain from drilling a tunnel to the dungeon even though he was advertising it for free.

“We’ll handle this!”

At that moment Berad stood up and shouted. Ralph and Kalliben also followed him.

“Yes! We’ve sweated blood digging in the dungeon. I can’t just let those vile henchmen steal all our hard work!”

“Don’t be stupid.”

Mellin jumped in with a frustrated expression.

“You’ve spent a month there so you know how big and complex the dungeon is. How can 10 people find all those guys? You need to find a minimum of 100 people. If we enter then they will systematically deal with us. We’ll just be surrounded by them in the dungeon and get wiped out.”

“I’m not afraid of death!”

“Yes, what does it matter if we die once or twice?”

Mellin sighed and shook his head.

“That way won’t solve anything.”

Mellin’s words were correct. In fact, not all the users had been scared off by the PK case. Users like Ciel and Kuma who fought with Ark weren’t put off by it. But that was only dozens of people. There were over 100 chaotic people and he wasn’t even sure of the number but he wouldn’t have enough to deal with all of them. He had to admit it. Mt. Fargo’s dungeon had been seized by Laius. And.....

Sector Management Information Window

Sector Code: S-20 Sector Rating: Lv. 1

Sector Range: 1 kilometre around the entrance of Mt. Fargo.

Sector Manager: Ark (Agent: Dark Eden)

Number of Stores: 12 (7: Duty-free shops, 5: 5% tax of the income)

<Notice: 2 shops destroyed and 4 damaged and business is stopped until the damage is compensated>

Population: 1,180

Sector Assets: 4,374 gold

“Hah.....”

He sighed over and over again.

“Why did something like that happen? There’s no Fairy here so all the experience gathered from the past few days just flew away! No matter how precious the gallstones is from the Thanatos, it isn’t worth the risk and

anxiety.”

“Refund our entry fee!”

“Yes, I won’t be hunting here anymore!”

A large number of pioneers requested a refund since the PK incident. 1,000 people had left the sector. And Ark was forced to refund the 1 gold dungeon admission fee. However now money wasn’t the problem.

‘There are 13 days left for the audit command. Currently the only way to complete the quest is to expand the sector.’

The condition was that the population of 2,000 needed to be maintained for a week. In other words, he needed to attract back the pioneers and maintain it for at least 6 days. However the population couldn’t increase when the dungeon was basically closed. There were other hunting grounds around S-20 but that would only attract users for a short period of time. And there were other sectors in the Outlands. There was also no guarantee that the PK wouldn’t happen again. No, he was sure it would!

‘There is only one way to solve this situation.’

Ark would also hire pioneers like the Laius company! He could hire mercenaries to sweep through the dungeon. That would also fill up the population so it was killing two birds with one stone.

‘The problem is funding. It would cost quite a few gold to handle the chaotic people in the dungeon. A minimum of 100 people is necessary. Employing users in that method would require thousands of gold. My remaining 4,374 gold might not be enough.’

It would be useless even if he hired the mercenaries. He wouldn’t have the money to expand the sector as planned. He would fail the audit command!

‘No, there has to be some way! I can’t give up S-20 like this! I have to defend it! Chaotic.....if only I could pull out those damn chaotic bastards.....but the

dungeon is outside my sector and they're trapped in there.....'

It was at that moment. A lightning bolt flashed through Ark's head.

"Yes, that's right! I've misjudged the situation! Pioneers aren't entering the dungeon because of the chaotic PKers. So I thought they seized the dungeon but it is actually the opposite."

"The opposite? What are you saying?"

The Royal Guards were bewildered by Ark's words.

"Even if they infiltrated the dungeon in the normal state, they've all become chaotic once they killed the pioneers. They won't be able to leave the dungeon in that state. Many pioneers left but there are still more than 1,000 users in the sector. If they exit in a chaotic state then they would only be committing suicide. No matter how level they are, they won't be able to deal with all the users in the sector. If they enter the sector then that will also give the federation the chance to intervene. The Laius group knows of the relationship between Marquis Martin and me so they won't take that risk. So those guys are trapped in the dungeon."

"Eh....."

The Royal Guards thought furiously. Their expressions were asking why it mattered if they were locked up. But this difference was great for Ark.

'Yes, I don't need to have complicated thoughts!'

Ark ignored the members' '?' and looked around. The man wiping the Silver Star caught his eye. His name was Kurakan. He had kept on challenging Rapid while Ark was away and eventually won. However Ark got annoyed and beat him in a duel, sentencing him to serve the sector for a week. Honestly Ark hadn't expected Kurakan to keep his promise. Ark thought he would run off as soon as possible. However Kurakan had been obediently fulfilling his service time in S-20 with chores. In Kurakan's words.....

“So far I’ve duelled with hundreds of users and I’ve never lost. Dying is not the same as losing. Ark is the only one who I admitted defeat to. So I will keep the promise. It isn’t because Ark-nim knows my recognition code. I will look extremely cowardly if I run away. I can’t become Ark’s student if I commit such a cowardly act.”

“Student?”

“I intend to be a disciple that is like your subordinate.”

Kurakan snorted and struck his chest.

“When I started Galaxian I vowed to defeat 1,000 users. I won a duel with more than 500 users until I was beaten by Ark.”

He could guess how Kurakan won. He kept on challenging Rapid until he couldn’t rest and became sick. Well that was until he met Ark.

“But if I lost before 1,000 wins then that person would become my Hyung-nim. That is Ark-nim. You’re the only person in Galaxian who won against me.”

He couldn’t agree that Kurakan won against the other users but.....

“Okay. I’ll see what you do from now on and I will decide.”

Ark agreed that Kurakan would be a candidate to become his subordinate for the moment. His level and equipment weren’t that great but he was persistent in applying for the duel. That’s how he eventually managed to win against Kurakan. He could probably make use of him somehow.

‘That time is now.’

Ark grinned and beckoned towards Kurakan.

“Hey you. Look over here a moment.”

“Huh? Why?”

“It’s a little sudden but.....”

Ark pulled out his blue lightsaber.

“You have to die.”

–Has it been going as planned?

A husky voice flowed from the monitor. Just by listening to the voice, you could imagine that it came from a man in his 50s sitting arrogantly in a swivel chair and biting a cigar.

“Of course.”

Bain replied subserviently.

“They’ve receive an unrecoverable blow this time. The decrease in population ruined his plan to expand the sector and take the research centre. And the population will keep on decreasing as long as our criminals are here. That guy has no way to recover. Now we just need to wait for the audit time limit.....”

–Shut up!

The man shouted in a harsh voice. He stared at Bain with an unpleasant look and said.

–What is happening in S-20 right now can’t be related to the Laius company. The Laius headquarters doesn’t know anything about this. If there is a problem then everything will be blamed on you. Am I wrong?

“T-that’s right! I’m sorry!”

Bain closed his mouth and quickly lowered his head. The man then started talking again.

–The important thing isn’t the process but the result.

“I’m aware of that.”

–You’ve already done enormous damage to headquarters. Originally you would’ve been fired already. Have you forgotten who made sure you still have your neck?

“Of course! I will never forget Vice President-nim’s mercy!”

–But my benevolence has a limit.

The Vice President rubbed his cigar onto an ashtray and said.

–If you fail this time then it is the end.

“That will never happen!”

–I will believe you.

The man shut off his monitor at those words. Bain finally sighed with relief after a long time had passed.

“Phew.....”

He wiped the sweat on his forehead. He had no choice. That was the Vice President of the Laius company! His mood on that day could determine whether Bain’s neck stayed on or not. And Bain had been in danger of losing his job last time. The research institute built on the slopes of Mt. Fargo had been smashed. Bain was the warden so naturally he would be smashed as well. Yet he had been revived as a phoenix because of the Vice President’s mercy. If the Vice President abandoned him then he would be screwed!

Responsibility → Dismissal → Poverty → Homeless → Desperation → Death!

The route for a gloomy life replayed through his head. No, he wouldn’t even last that long. The Laius company was behind the S-20 incident. If it was discovered than the Laius company would suffer a huge blow. The Vice President would definitely push it all on Bain. Bain would become the scapegoat of all the illegal actions. If that situation occurred than he would be treated as a ‘thing.’ The Vice President had saved Bain. Thus he was a cannon fodder when there was a crisis. It wouldn’t just be a dismissal if he

failed. He would probably push all the responsibility on Bain and then silence him! His body would probably be found somewhere having died an unnatural death. No, if it was the Vice President then he would definitely do that.

Failure= death.

“But there’s no need to worry about that.”

Bain who had been looking uncomfortable smiled and shook his head. Everything was going according to plan. He had the airship crash into the sector and sneaked assassins into the dungeon. As the result the population of S-20 had decreased. Now the sector expansion was completely blocked.

‘Even if Ark manages to obtain the money from somewhere and passes the audit, he won’t be able to sustain the sector. He will know this no matter how stupid he is. He would have no choice but to give up. Ark would have to beg to buy it at 500 gold. But I have no intention of giving him even 1 gold.’

Bain’s mouth rose in a smile.

‘That Ark bastard, this is payback for treating me like a fool in front of all those pioneers. He will realize what a big mistake he made.’

“Huhuhuhu! Huhuhuhu!”

Bain laughed crazily as he imagined the future. Suddenly the door opened and a guard ran in.

“Chief!”

“Huhuhu.....cough!”

Bain choked with surprise.

“Holy shit! You almost killed me! Do you know how to knock?”

“There’s no time for that!”

“There’s no time? You mean you don’t care if I’ll choke and die?”

“I mean.....look outside!”

“I don’t know what’s going on. Now you want me to check outside.....”

Bain suddenly flinched and closed his mouth. Bain was sitting in the office on the top floor of the institute that had been completed. His balcony looked over S-20 so he could watch Ark’s efforts to revive the sector.

Yet.....yet.....

“What the hell is going on?”

Bain looked back at the guards.

“I don’t know. Why.....?”

Kwaaaaah! Kwaaaaah!

The guards answer became buried by an ensuing explosion. The clouds scattered because of a storm. The space distorted and an airship appeared with a flash of light.

“Che, they’ve all gathered.”

The man talking had a thick scar carved on his face. Then someone near the man laughed and said.

“They’re all at a similar level anyway. There is no need for Hyung-nim to worry.”

“Hrmm, am I that strong?”

“Of course. Who is Hyung-nim? Hyung-nim is the great warrior who wiped out dozens of great worms! Isn’t that Hyung-nim? I decided to serve Hyung-nim because of that strength.”

“If Hyung-nim is with us then we are stronger than all those users!”

“Hyung-nim is the king!”

“Huhuhu. Yes, that’s me.”

The man with the scar laughed. The man had henchmen that were clamouring away. His party had challenged the dungeon with the highest difficulty in Istana’s southern region. While everyone was wiped out by the last boss, he had fought the great worm and won. His name was Hoover. He was called the worm slaughterer by other users.

Naturally he had the best equipment that couldn’t be compared to general users! He was wearing one of the best hybrid armour and a level 100 diamond coated axe with a particle cannon as his secondary weapon! This equipment was something anyone could boast of.

Players checked out other players. Any user with experience could check the performance of equipment.

“W-what is that?”

“What type of rich person is he? Those are all unique equipment.”

The surrounding users chattered as they stared at him with envious eyes.

“There is no one here who can beat me in a 1-on-1 fight.”

Hoover started bragging further as he was complimented. Numerous people found that their most exhilarating moment was when connecting to a virtual reality game. That’s why users spent money to buy better equipment and stayed up all night to raise their skills. In reality they might be service industry workers, parents, students or unemployed but they could brag about their characters in game!

‘Huhuhu, keep on being envious! I stayed up all night playing the game to obtain this!’

However Hoover’s pleasure didn’t last long.

“Hey, look at that!”

“Whoa, what the? That armour? It’s not a joke?”

The users were suddenly interested in something behind Hoover. Hoover and his followers turned around and their mouths dropped open. The players split like the Red Sea for a long haired user wearing distinctive armour! It was black armour spewing blue lights that unfolded like wings.

“The armour, somewhere.....”

Hoover muttered blankly.

“That armour, I’ve seen it before! It is the Kurim armour that is only given to users within the top 10 at the arena! That means the user has reached at least the top 10 in a tournament?”

“I heard it was quite a high level tournament.....”

“That’s right. I only finished in the top 300.”

There was equipment that couldn’t be obtained no matter how much money the person had. Binding equipment was given after completing certain quests or defeating certain boss monsters. That guy was wearing an armour like that. Kurim was quite a difficult material to obtain. It was proof of the person’s skills.

“Hyung-nim, doesn’t that guy seem strong?”

Hoover’s followers asked. Hoover’s mouth was gaping open but he quickly closed it after hearing the question.

“Bah! He just needs to place 10 to receive the item. If I participated in the tournament then I would’ve placed 1st.”

“I-is it like that?”

“Of course!”

Hoover snorted and replied. Then the long-haired guy passing near looked at Hoover. A cold light sparkled in the grey eyes.

“That.....what did I just hear you say?”

“Eh? What?”

Hoover stepped back with an embarrassed expression. Then the long haired man walked by Hoover without a smile.

“Hyung-nim.....”

The henchmen looked at their leader with disappointment. The shamed Hoover turned towards the long haired man.

“Hey! You over there! What’s with the attitude? If you want a fight.....”

“Shut up. Don’t block the road and get out of the way. My autobots can’t pass.”

An irritated voice was heard from behind him.

“You.....heok!”

Hoover flared up as he turned around only to retreat again. Two robots armed with various weapons were behind him.

“What’s with this reaction? Is this the first time seeing autobots?”

A small body riding on the back of a dinosaur like robot laughed.

“I call them autobots but they are just lumps of machine parts. I painstakingly constructed this for a few months and created a special edition. Did you just talk about a tournament? You mean that guy wearing the armour?”

“Y-you know that guy?”

“I know. I’ve met him a few times. Well I’m stronger than him. If the tournament rules had allowed autobots then I would’ve come on top instead of that guy. Isn’t that right?”

–It is like Master said.

A robot answered in a hollow voice. Among the engineer professions, there

were those capable of controlling combat robots so they were called controllers and were similar to summoners. They could use robots called autobots. They needed various production related skills as well as a huge amount of money to make the robots. Therefore Hoover had only seen a controller a few times.

The autobots that Hoover saw were at least 1 metre in size and were similar to the battle androids. However the autobots in front of him were nearly 2 metres in size! Making an autobot of that size meant he had a significant engineering skill. And he had two. The autobots were capable of moving automatically but the controller had to control the small movements directly. In other words, that person could direct two robots at the same time.

‘What? This place? Is it a convention?’

It was ridiculous. The controller continued talking like he hadn’t noticed Hoover.

“That bastard, he obtained the Kurim armour because I couldn’t show the power of a controller. This place doesn’t have stingy regulations like the arena. But that isn’t my purpose.”

“Hey Park, you came as well?”

Then another user approached. This time it was a woman but the equipment she was wearing wasn’t a joke. They seemed to know each other well as the controller called Park pouted.

“Kaya? Sheesh, can’t I come?”

“That’s not what I meant. No, I thought you would come. You need money to create the autobots. If you saw the image than it is impossible for you to hold still.”

“What about you?”

“Of course I have the same purpose.”

Kaya grinned and showed a picture saved on the Nymphe.

A few hours ago.

An event occurred that would definitely shake Galaxian. The thing that shook many users was a post.

-Jackpot! Loot all the time!

That was the title of the post. The users who checked the post were shocked. The attached screen shot showed a user making a V sign next to a corpse. The really shocking thing was the items around the user! The armour was worth hundreds of gold. Dozens of gallstones were also scattered around.

Today S-20 became infested with a lot of chaotic people.

I'm a user with some skills. I came looking for gallstones to upgrade my equipment. The chaotic people appeared after I entered the dungeon. So we fought. I defeated him and a whole bunch of items poured out. The situation had reversed.

This was the contents of the post. That was what surprised the users. Like any other game, Galaxian's site had dozens of posts a day bragging about the items obtained. The items shown in the screenshot didn't have a significantly higher value than other posts. The reason it had so many hits was because the user who dropped it was chaotic.

-Hey, is this real?

-This is the lottery. Did all of this really come from one guy?

-Isn't someone doing a trick just to arouse some attention?

At first the reactions were disbelieving. They might've been items obtained from other users. Anyone who saw it would have a pain in their stomach. So initially there wasn't much of a reaction. The explosive reaction of users

started from some comments.

–This is probably true.

–Yes, I heard from a friend that the dungeon in S-20 is dominated with chaotic players.

–Hundreds of users have been subjected to PK.

–The users killed by PK dropped quite a few equipment and gallstones.

–I heard the chaotic players are still there. They can't leave because the entrance of the dungeon opens to a sector. They probably intend to leave after gathering a bunch of gallstones.

The information was transmitted one after another! Once again, a chaotic state had a considerably large penalty in most virtual reality games. They were branded as criminals and punished by law. However users were afraid to become chaotic for a separate reason. It was reverse PK!

They could get PKed by other users. When a user died, there was a chance to drop equipment. If a regular user died then that chance was only 5%. But it was different when talking about the death of chaotic users. There was a 100% chance of dropping equipment! If a chaotic user died then an equipment would drop unconditionally. 2~3 random items from their bag would also drop as well.

‘If I can win!’

The rewards were definitely worth hunting down chaotic users. The situation changed 180 degrees once that idea caught hold. S-20 had chaotic users PK hundreds of people. This meant they had high levels and used expensive equipment. If they decided to gather gallstones while trapped there then there was a high chance of gallstones dropping.

Dungeon infested with chaotic players → expensive items dropped.

They dominate the dungeon and don't leave → they are trapped like rabbits.

This formula was immediately made. In other words.....

‘This is an opportunity for a jackpot!’

Chaotic players were a dangerous existence that users had to be careful of. But that was only if the user couldn’t win. Items dropped by chaotic players were like those from a boss monster. Furthermore, they were criminals. Killing them would increase the federation contribution. That’s why all the pioneers flocked to S-20. The dungeon was hiding more than 100 chaotic people! Some users might fear the dungeon. But those with a lot of skills considered it the best hunting ground.

“I can’t let a treasure chest like this pass by.”

Kaya said with a smile.

“But my purpose isn’t the items. I was thinking of forming an agent but my federation contribution is a bit lacking. It is easier to gain contribution from killing chaotic users than from doing dozens of miscellaneous quests. But that doesn’t mean I won’t eat the items.”

“Bah, do you think I will leave you a share?”

“That’s what I want to say.”

“Let’s see who can gather more. Let’s go!”

The two autobots thumped towards Mt. Fargo at Park’s command. Kaya wasn’t to be outdone and also ran towards the dungeon.

“Dammit!”

Hoover exclaimed as he stared after them.

“This isn’t good! We have to hurry! Our prey might be snatched from us!”

Hoover and his henchmen chased after them. It wasn’t just them. Dozens of airships were continuously appearing at S-20. Users poured towards the dungeon after landing. And 1 person was watching the scene with a pleased

look!

“It’s a success!”

Ark was S-20’s administrator. There was no need to explain at this point. Ark was the one who created the post that shook Galaxian!

–Those guys are trapped in the dungeon!

It all began from this thought. He found a way to solve all his problems. Attract users to the dungeon using the lure of chaotic items! The problem was how to quickly spread the news. This was the reason for Kurakan’s sacrifice. Ark killed Kurakan in a duel and took a screen shot with is items scattered around. Of course the face was hidden behind a mosaic.

This was the result. Users arriving one after another. If they came to hunt chaotic users then there was no need to ask about their skills. But he assembled the users for a different reason. Ark’s purpose was the users themselves!

‘The population of the sector is growing again!’

He still had 10 days left for his <Audit Command>. The population would increase to 2,000 by then and the situation would reverse.

“Now it’s your turn. What will you do?”

Ark looked up at the Laius’ research institute and laughed. Bain was squeezing his head on the balcony of the top floor.

“It can’t be! What? All these peopleeeeeee!”

Water Cleaning Strategy

Kakak, pajijjik!

Sparks rose in the darkness. At the same time, 2 flashes occurred on the left and right.

“Ugh!”

One person moaned and kneeled down.

“The horoscope I received a few days again really isn’t a joke. Now many rare prey remain and I just happened to meet one.”

“Rare prey.....”

Ark smiled at the man’s words. The man making a rotten expression had a red ID floating on top of his head. It was evidence that Mt. Fargo was occupied with chaotic players. Ark lifted his blue lightsaber.

“Don’t tell me you still think you’re hunters?”

“Dammit!”

Pepeng-!

The man cursed and smoke gushed out. It was a smoke bomb and dense smoke instantly filled the cave. The chaotic users in the dungeon had many things prepared in order to escape. If he was anyone else then his opponent would’ve escaped. However the chaotic player had met the wrong opponent.

“Clairvoyance!”

A blue light spread over Ark’s eyes. He detected a shape moving through the smoke. Ark extended his lightsaber.

“Khafra Fencing 3rd style! Galaxy Sword!”

There was a vortex that blew the smoke apart. Dozens of swords were projected forward and hit the man. It was common sense that damage and the

chances of a critical hit increased when attacking from behind! The opponent's health drastically dropped as he was struck by dozens of swords and he was blown back 10 metres and died.

“Now shall I open the treasure box?”

Ark walked forward at a relaxed pace. Something fell as the sword lodged in the guy's back disappeared.

-Destruction Pants (Magic)

Item Type: Heavy Armour (Pants) Wearer Restriction: Level 90

Defense: 45 Durability: 25/80

The 4 large companies account for 70% of the weapons and armours distributed around the federation.

The price is slightly expensive but the performance is the best so it is difficult for others to compete. In order for small and medium enterprises to compete, their products need to have additional functions and options. Of course, the price had no choice but to rise but the functions are something often used by pioneers.

<Stamina +20>

* Add-on (Hidden Blade): This armour has superconductor blades hidden in the knee area. A strike with the knee can cause fatal damage if the opponent is caught off guard by the blade.

<Damage: 20~30. 30% chance of causing Bleed>

“It was something like this.”

Previously when he had attacked the guy. Ark remembered being damaged by a knee strike. It was just an ordinary knee yet he had started bleeding. He had been confused but it was all due to the blades hidden in the knee area.

Well, the 'hidden blade' is just like a skill but.....

“There was technology like this? If the opponent is at the same level as me than hidden technology like that can change the situation. Equipment that monsters dropped can be remodelled in this way. I'll have to be careful if I duel with users in the future.”

He didn't know about it. In the game he needed to continuously acquire skills and item information. He learnt quite a bit from fighting the chaotic users. In addition, he also earned income!

“This can get at least 100 gold.”

That wasn't the only item dropped. There were also 4 intermediate gallstones. Ark packed the Destruction Pants and looked around with a happy look.

“There aren't a lot of chaotic people anymore so this is valuable.”

The chaotic group that had pushed Ark into a corner! However that situation changed after he posted something on the website that caught the users' attention. The users gathered in order to hunt the chaotic users for their items. But it didn't work that well in the beginning. The chaotic people hadn't come here by chance. They had intentionally been hired by the Laius company! In order to hunt they had been organized into parties. Therefore quite a few users were killed in the beginning. But that only lasted for a brief moment.

“Damn it, they're organized!”

“This place really is infested with chaotic players everywhere.”

“We won't beat them if we fight by ourselves!”

“In the end the only.....”

The eyes of the chaotic hunters met each other. People with the same purpose formed a party!

“It can’t be helped. I’m unwilling but I will grasp your hand this time.”

“Okay. We’ll share the loot.”

The hunters became organized in order to match the chaotic users. The opponents were chaotic. If a user didn’t have confidence in their ability to catch chaotic users then they wouldn’t have come out in the first place. The users who gathered were actually quite famous in different regions. The chaotic users quickly decreased once they started working together. Over 50 chaotic players were caught in a few days! But they had no place to escape.

‘The Laius company might not know this but S-20 is still my sector. S-20 is at the dungeon entrance and a large number of users are outside.’

The result would be the same if the chaotic users left the dungeon. They were like mice in a bag. The only way they could be free was if the Laius company obtained S-20. They gave up on resistance and scattered or hid.

‘But I won’t let that happen!’

The population of S-20 was going up again. 60~70 chaotic hunters had gathered after seeing Ark’s post. They alone couldn’t increase the population by 1,500 people. However their influx into the dungeon had decreased the number of chaotic people by half. The dungeon was safe to start hunting again!

‘This is an opportunity to gather back the pioneers!’

Ark set a sign in front of the sector.

-Notice.

Limited time only!

Currently S-20 has received a command to stop all facilities.

Therefore the sector and dungeon admission fee has been stopped. All facilities will be free and open for your disposal.

Operation had been suspended so he couldn't charge an admission fee. He had no obligation to stop users from entering the sector.

“Free?”

“I heard a lot of people rushed to kill the chaotic users.....”

“Then why should we go to another dungeon?”

The rumour quickly spread among users. But there was even more.

“Hahaha, it is a jackpot!”

“I did well coming here!”

“It's only been 2 days and I've gained 1,000 gold from the chaotic users!”

The news was also spread by the chaotic hunters!

“Yes, there is no reason to be afraid of the chaotic users.”

“If we have a few more party members then we can catch these guys.”

“Damn, why didn't I think of that before? It is like that. Now those guys have got there before us! Catching one chaotic person is better than dozens of Thanatos!”

“If chaotic hunters are in the dungeon then there won't be any problems hunting the Thanatos! Plus it is free! Let's go!”

Pioneers once again flocked to S-20! Thanks to that, the population that had fallen to 1,100 increased to over 2,000 in just 3 days. There was 9 days left for the audit command.

‘Now I don't have to worry about the population. I can apply for public facilities 2 days before the deadline. If I can buy the sector extension then all my problems will be resolved!’

.....He wanted to be relieved.....

However there were two problems with this. The first was the funds needed for the extension. He had 5,400 gold when the issues first started but he needed to refund a large amount thanks to the PK event. In addition, the population had grown again but he couldn't get any money from the dungeon, sector or airfield. That's why Ark dived in directly!

'If I catch the chaotic users then I can earn some money. This is also relevant to me.'

Ark was also in a more favourable position compared to the other hunters. The Royal Guards were the ones who restored the dungeon after it collapsed so they knew it better than anyone else. Naturally they quickly found the chaotic people. Ark was able to find 7 chaotic people thanks to that. He obtained 9 equipment from them. Combined with the gallstones that dropped, he obtained a total of 1,500 gold. This meant the sector extension problem was okay.

'The problem is that Bain knows of this situation.'

That was the second problem. Ark was worried about this the most. Bain already knew Ark needed to extend to sector to resolve the audit problem. If he made up his mind to remove the research centre then Ark's plan would fail. He would be deprived of his sector administrator license. The research centre had already been almost completed. If it was dismantled then Bain would suffer a huge loss. Therefore the Laius company couldn't easily remove it. But they would also suffer damages if Ark extended the sector.

'Even if they lose money, their purpose is to obtain S-20 so they might judge that is better.' But there were no signs of that. Rather than demolition, the construction of the research centre had continued.

'It is one of those two options. They either can't remove the research centre or there is another ulterior motive. It is imperative that I figure out what they're thinking. If I figure it out then I can defend against it. In the worst

case scenario, if they dismantle the research centre then I'll have to sell the Silver Star!'

While Ark was busy thinking.

-Hyung-nim, I've found it!

Kalliben's voice was heard from the Nymphé.

-A chaotic person is hiding in a corner of the middle layer.

"Okay. I'm coming so stay there."

Ark smiled and replied.

"I'm lucky today."

"Chief-nim, I've received a report that another one was killed!"

"You don't have to keep on telling me things like that!"

Bain shouted in a raspy voice.

"That damn bastard Ark! Why does he keep on interfering every time? I'm different from a mere pioneer so I should be able to step on him! So why does he always embarrass me? But he is still a trivial pioneer! He's mistaken if he thinks he can beat me with something like this. I'll make him realize the difference between an elite executive of the Laius company and a pioneer!"

Bain bit his lips until it became bloody. Like Ark thought, the reason the research centre wasn't demolished was because Bain had an ulterior motive. His conclusion was correct. Chaotic hunters had started to gather. Bain already had a premonition that things would turn out like that. He had intended to just dismantle the research institute.

'But there is no guarantee the problem will be settled with that. Since he is trying to settle the audit order by expanding the sector, it is clear he doesn't

have a lot of funds. But there is no guarantee he can't raise the money within the time limit. He had a spacecraft so he might be able to sell it. Removing the research centre isn't necessarily the solution. And.....'

The research centre had already been constructed. If he took it down then he would receive huge losses. Of course, Laius is one of the 4 big companies so that damage would only be a drop in their wealth. The problem wasn't the Laius company but Bain.

'A research centre had already been destroyed!'

What would happen if he caused enormous damage again?

Needless to say, it would be a dismissal! Even if Laius obtained S-20, Bain would still be finished.

'I have to obtain S-20 in order to live! I have to do whatever it takes!'

In the end, Bain found a way. A way to deal an unrecoverable blow to Ark!

'That Ark bastard, let's see you think your way out of this. Yes, laugh while you still can. I'll soon turn your laughter into tears. I'll make him realize how stupid it is to mess with the Laius group.'

Bain smiled and asked a guard soldier.

"What is the progress?"

"It has almost been completed. We can start it at any time so you just have to say."

"The necessary personnel?"

"We've failed to reach the target because we've had to gather them covertly. But I've contacted several organizations and the target number of personnel will soon be gathered."

"That means we just have to wait."

Bain looked down at S-20 and grinned.

“Just wait Ark. I’ll soon show you hell!”

“Hrmm.....”

S-20’s main office.

Ark had a solemn expression on his face. Thanks to the chaotic hunters, the influx of pioneers had exceeded 2,000 for 6 days. Now he only needed to wait one more day to apply for a server extension. In the meantime he diligently hunted the chaotic users to ensure he had plenty of funds for the extension. He only needed 1 more day before everything would be settled. His concern had been that the research centre would be demolished. The already completed research centre was in front of the sector. Even if they started demolishing it now, they wouldn’t be able to remove all the facilities in one day. There was also a few days left for the audit command so he could sell the Silver Star to obtain the funds required. But Bain didn’t know this.

‘That’s the problem.’

Nothing had happened!

‘He must have an ulterior motive that I can’t think of.....’

Ark had interrupted their plan by releasing the chaotic hunters. But he hadn’t detected any responses to his action.

“Perhaps they just gave up?”

Hegel carefully presented his opinion. But Ark shook his head with a resolute expression.

“That is impossible.”

If it was just the Laius company then they might give up. However Marquis Jyubel was associated with this business. It was a chance to deal a large blow

to a rival politician so he wouldn't easily give up. He probably negotiated to gain a stake in the research centre. But there were no visible actions despite only having one day left.

"Is there really no movement?"

"Apparently."

Ark replied curtly and looked at the research centre.

"What they are doing is unknown."

Of course those guys wouldn't be doing nothing. It just meant the thing they were planning wasn't visible. He wouldn't be able to figure out the reason from the outside.

"I need to go there directly if I want to find out the answer."

"Huh? Go there directly?"

"Those guys won't let us in!"

"So I have to hide."

This was the reason for Ark's serious expression. The thing Bain was planning definitely wouldn't be small. Right now he had 1 day before he could get permission to extend the sector. Ark had to assume what Bain was planning would happen today. It wasn't the time to be playing around. The final method Ark came up with was to sneak in! He had to enter the research centre directly in order to figure out Bain's plan. Confusion appeared on the members' faces as they heard Ark's words.

"T-that is ridiculous!"

"Do you know how many guards there are in the research centre? You heard what Tori said when the research centre was being built. The centre has enormous security. Sneaking in is just suicide!"

"I also oppose it."

Mellin jumped in and shook his head.

“We know better than anyone what a great pioneer you are. But something like this is reckless. You are the administrator of this sector. There is no telling what will happen if you caught. No, you’ll be caught before you even enter.”

“I’ve already thought of a way to enter.”

“What? What do you mean?”

“Have you already forgotten? The research centre.....”

Ark was replying when he suddenly flinched and shut his mouth. It was like a lightning bolt struck him.

“Oh my god! I had forgotten about that!”

“Forgotten? What do you mean?”

“If what I’m thinking is right.....”

Ark muttered like he was spellbound.

“Kalliben, Beleol, have you seen any airships entering or leaving since the research centre was completed?”

“Yes, I saw several airships in the last few days.”

‘That’s it!’

Kalliben’s words combined everything in Ark’s head. Bain hadn’t acted even with the sector expansion time limit approaching. He had finally figured out why after remembering something he forgot. The answer was right in front of him.

“That is what he is planning?”

Ark muttered as he bit his lip.

“Can we trust him?”

A low voice said in the dark. Another man laughed.

“Who do you think I am?”

“Well, that....”

“Butcher. That is my nickname. I had to kill many people to get that name. That guy won’t be a problem.”

“But those guys aren’t to be trifled with.”

“You still don’t know.”

There were quite a few people in the darkness.

“Aren’t we criminals because we PKed?”

“We did it because monster hunting is boring. The battles were repetitive. This appeased our boredom.”

“Chaotic hunter? Kikiki, how funny. Those bastards don’t know what it means to be chaotic. We have the capabilities to catch those bastards. They’ll find out soon enough. They’ll be so scared that they’ll start pissing their pants.”

“Y-you are so reliable.”

“Then will we get the promised reward?”

“If we don’t get paid after the work is finished.....”

The man’s pupils shone with an intimidating light. Then Bain shook his head and answered quickly.

“That will never happen. I’ll make sure you get paid at the end of the day. And I’ll stay here as a personal guarantee until you escape.”

“If you give us the promised fee then you don’t need to worry about

anything.”

“Huhuhu, this is quite good. We’re getting paid to slaughter people.”

“I can soak up the taste of blood in a long time.”

‘W-what scary guys.....’

Bain sweated as he looked around. The people around him had malicious auras surrounding them. They were chaotic people who murdered pioneers. This was Bain’s plan. Ark had called in chaotic hunters. The countermeasure Bain came up with was easy. If Ark called in chaotic hunters then he needed to call in more chaotic users. Bain’s subordinates contacted every notorious organization to gather more chaotic users. The final number exceeded 2,000! That was S-20’s current population.

‘There might be 2,000 pioneers in S-20 but only a few hundred of them can take care of the criminals!’

It was clear what would happen if 2,000 chaotic users swarmed that place. The chaotic hunters were strong but the criminals were bad guys. It was like the chaotic hunters were chasing savage birds of prey! S-20 would instantly be turned into ruins. Of course he couldn’t send too many villains into the sector. It might give the federation a chance to intervene and there was a risk of backlash on Bain.

‘If the events take place in the dungeon then the federation can’t intervene.’

That’s why Bain and the criminals were gathered in a dark tunnel. The identity of this tunnel.....

-This is a construction site for the Laius company.

Sorry for the inconvenience caused by construction noise.

Laius is going to build an underpass to Mt. Fargo so all pioneers are welcome to use the dungeon for free.

It was the tunnel Bain had advertised when the construction first started on

the research centre. In fact, this tunnel had already been completed a few days ago. They didn't disclose it for the sake of this moment!

'Huhuhu, you diligently cleaned out the dungeon over the last 6 days? But I won't let you extend the sector. You won't be able to stop this.'

"How long do we have to wait in this place?"

"My body is itching to move."

The chaotic users took out their weapons and started fidgeting. They might be creepy murderers but right now Bain thought they were very reliable.

'The pioneers in this dungeon would be swept away in seconds. Ark will once again fail to expand the sector. And there is only 2 days left until the audit time limit. He won't be able to maintain the population in time and he will be stripped of his administrator license!'

This was one of the reasons he didn't move until the last moment. He wanted to gather more criminals as well as crush all of Ark's hopes!

'And now is the time!'

"It is time! Everybody get ready! Make an opening in the tunnel!"

Bain shouted like a general.

Kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa!

At the same time, the end of the tunnel was torn down with a heavy sound. Dust fell as a cave spread out in front of them. It was Mt. Fargo's dungeon!

"Enter and kill all the pioneers!"

"Ohhhhhh!"

The criminals cried out like beasts and poured into the dungeon. The yells rang through the dark cave.....

"What? There's nobody here?"

“Weren’t the pioneers crowding here? Where did they all go?”

“What? There isn’t anybody? Such a thing?”

The criminals were looking around in confusion at the empty dungeon.

Ku ku ku ku! Ku ku ku ku!

There was suddenly a loud roar as the tunnel shook. The roaring sound was coming from the rear of the research centre’s tunnel. Bain turned his head with shock as he heard the deafening roar. No, it wasn’t only Bain. The thousands of villains in the tunnel were also astonished. The source of the tunnel’s shaking was.....

“W-water!”

“Water is pouring into the tunnel!”

Kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa!

They screamed as a giant river swallowed them. Bain lost his spirit as he was caught by the current. Bain and the criminals were swept by the water through the complex dungeon. How much time had passed?

Pepeng-!

Bain reached a sewage pipe and his body soared into the sky. He landed on stone earth and rolled dozens of metres before painfully lifting his head.

“Huh! It really worked.”

“I thought flooding the closed up mountain with water was nonsense.....”

“And they are all chaotic. When I went looking they were hard to find. Are they cockroaches? There were that many guys hiding?”

People were buzzing around the criminals. Bain and the criminals had been spurted out of the dungeon by the water. A huge number of pioneers were now surrounding their drenched forms. And the person in front who was watching Bain.....

“A-Ark!”

Bain screamed.

“Isn’t that the director of Laius’ research centre?”

“T-this.....don’t tell me you.....?”

“As expected from the head of the laboratory, your judgement of the situation really is fast.”

Ark said with a smile. Once again, Ark hadn’t noticed Bain’s plan one day ago. Therefore he thought about sneaking into the research centre despite the risk. And he already thought of a way to sneak in.

‘I can enter the centre through the tunnel that Bain advertised would open for free. That means they are constructing that tunnel. If I use the tunnel then I don’t have to sneak past the guards at the door.’

Just as he was thinking that! Ark had forgotten the most important thing.

‘What if the tunnel has already been completed?’

That meant they could freely come and go from the dungeon without going through the sector. Furthermore, the tunnel was inside the research centre. In other words, Bain could send a large number of chaotic users through the tunnel. Kalliben’s testimony supported Ark’s guess. There were several transport ships that completed a few round trips to the research centre. It was already completed so there was no reason for the airship to come and go so often. Then there could only be one reason for the transport ships!

‘Collecting troops!’

It was a no-brainer. It was a rehash of the strategy to decrease S-20’s population with mass PK! But now the situation was different from before. Previously hundreds of people were killed in an instant but now there were people chasing after the chaotic users. Some of them were chaotic hunters who were experts in PVP.

“Before 100 chaotic users were enough but now players are aware of them. Bain has to gather enough troops to decrease the population to less than 2,000 before the time limit to extend the sector!”

However there was no reason to panic. Ark had suffered a fatal blow because he had been unaware. But Ark already suspected Bain’s plan. There is only one day remaining until he could apply for a sector expansion so he could just stop the pioneers from entering the dungeon. The troops were gathered to PK. And the dungeon was right outside the sector. If they couldn’t leave the dungeon then they couldn’t PK.

‘But I can’t be assured with that. If this operation fails then it will be a huge loss to the Laius company. There is no telling what they will do. If Bain gathered this many chaotic users then they might even attack the sector. And then he just has to destroy the tunnel to get rid of the evidence. In that case.....’

He had to drag them out first. That was the conclusion Ark reached. The method was surprisingly simple. It was time for the Royal Guards to show their muscles! Bain had purposefully built the research centre in the path of the channel to annoy Ark. And the tunnel to the dungeon was in the basement.

‘I can connect the water channel to the tunnel!’

At that moment a plan formed in Ark’s head. Needless to say, the ones carrying out the plan were the Royal Guards! The members had spent one month only shovelling. The one who showed the most significant growth was Milan! Once again, the proficiency of a skill could differ even if two people were the same level. Technical achievement depended on the person’s talent and ability to learn. That’s why he removed Mellin and Hegel from digging in the early days. The senior citizen (Mellin) and child (Hegel) showed no signs of their proficiency rising after reaching Dig Lv. 2. Of course it was the same vice versa. The Royal Guards’ proficiency grew at a similar speed once

reaching Lv. 2. However, some with talent had their proficiency increase rapidly after reaching Lv. 2 and Milan was the one who showed the most potential.

“The texture of a shovel in my hand! The comfortable sensation when the shovel digs into the earth! What....I mean.....it seems like I’ve been doing this for a long time.....yes! I have been! The duty of a treasure hunter is to find treasure! And the basic of a treasure search is digging! I can’t possible get this feeling from an excavator! I’m a true treasure hunter for the first time!”

He awakened! His skill proficiency quickly increased!

-Milan has realized the heart of ‘Dig’ and his skill proficiency has reached Lv. 4.

A member who finally beat Ark in digging was born. The enlightenment Milan gained was incredible.

Pa pa pa pa! Pa pa pa pa!

Milan dug that land at a speed equivalent to an excavator with just one shovel! The seat of the strongest digger had transferred to Milan but Ark’s Dig was still intermediate level! And the remaining 7 also obtained intermediate Dig. In just one day, Ark and the crew worked together to connect the channel to the dungeon. And when they opened the floodgate! This was the result. The lake water swept Bain and the criminals through the dungeon and outside. This was Ark’s Water Cleaning Strategy!

“I used the water to eradicate these pests.”

Ark said with a smile.

“You.....you bastard.....you dare.....”

“What are you doing?” What is he saying?”

The chaotic users were still unable to grasp the situation and gaped at Ark.

“It really isn’t a joke. Well I can understand just by looking at them. Their names indicate they are chaotic. But there’s something I don’t know. I’m certain that tunnel was connected to the Laius research centre. The tunnel was connected to a channel which is why water came flooding in. But why is the director hanging with criminals? Don’t tell me that Laius is conspiring with criminal organizations.....”

“S-shut up! There is no evidence!”

“No evidence?”

Ark smiled as he looked around.

“Isn’t the fact that you’re here evidence?”

“I told you before! I don’t have any connection with these guys!”

“I guess we’ll see when I investigate.”

“Who do you think I am? I am the director of Laius! You guys dare do something.....”

“You seem to have forgotten but I am the administrator of S-20. And right now you are on my land. S-20. I have the authority to investigate even if you are Laius’ director.”

“T-that.....”

Bain retreated with a pale, stricken face. He then lifted his head and looked at those gathered at the dungeon entrance. In the meantime he had summoned chaotic users from around the planet. They numbered 2,000. That kind of number could take care of all the pioneers gathered around. No, they had to! If he gave up then Bain was a dead man anyway. The Vice President wouldn’t leave him alive. But there was still hope if Ark and the pioneers at S-20 were annihilated. Ark would be deprived of his administrator license and Laius would obtain S-20. Then Laius would cover up what happened here!

“Kill them!”

Bain waved his arm and shouted.

“Kill all the guys here! It is the only way to live!”

The 2,000 chaotic users simultaneously took out their weapons. It wasn't because of Bain's command. They had no choice but to kill the pioneers in order to escape.

“Dammit! If this happens then we have to see it through to the end!”

“Yes, we were going to do it anyway so let's blow up the whole sector!”

“Chaotic scum!”

The pioneers also lifted their weapons. And just before there would be a flurry of blades and bullets!

Kwaaaaah! Kwaaaaah!

An explosion scattered the clouds in the sky above the two groups. Dozens of airships appeared in with a flash of light. Bain and the chaotic users' faces drained of blood as they saw the airships. It was due to the mark on the hull. The blue planet and ship of the galactic federation!

–Galactic federation's 1st special division.

That was the sentence written below the mark.

“Hah.....”

The man occupying the captain seat in the centre of the main airship. The middle aged noble looked at the monitor and clicked his tongue. He looked at his adjutant before smiling and saying.

“This is really perplexing. I was just observing the 1st special division's training manoeuvres only to see this scene. Doesn't it seem like thieves are

attacking that sector? A sector falls under the authority of the federation. Those thieves are attacking a sector. We might be here for training but we can't pretend ignorance. Isn't that right?"

"I agree!"

The adjutant proclaimed.

"Then this will be our practice. The special division is one of the two major forces of the Emperor. The opponents are just mere thieves so they can be considered practice. Don't disgrace yourselves when fighting with them."

"That's right!"

"I'll give you 30 minutes."

The middle aged noble said after peering at his watch.

"Don't let even one of them leave alive."

"Go! Special Division, attack!"

The adjutant shouted through the microphone and a lower portion of the airships opened.

Dugung! Dugung! Dugung! Dugung!

Thousands of soldiers started pouring out of the air chute like bees from a beehive. The sight of thousands of soldiers pouring down like rain was spectacular!

"It can't be! What? Youuuuuuu!"

And to some people it was a nightmare.

After the Clean-up

‘This is Jyubel?’

Ark looked at the man sitting opposite him. He heard the name several times but this was the first time he saw him. Currently the federation council was divided into two big powers. One principle axis was belonged to Marquis Martin, aka the military factor. Marquis Martin who was in charge of the Domestic Affairs department was the head of the other one, aka the parliament faction. They were the heads of the two big factions! Ark naturally imagined a crafty aristocrat but Jyubel was actually quite young. He was in his late 30s or early 40s?

But that didn’t mean he was easy or soft. The fact that he reached this position at his age meant he was a noble Ark should be wary of. He wasn’t the only one Ark needed to be wary of. There was a middle aged man sitting next to Jyubel. According to Marquis Martin’s introduction, he was the vice president of the Laius company.

“Marquis Martin-nim must be quite leisurely now that there is a treaty in the Bellin constellation. You suddenly wanted to meet me and the Laius’ vice president.”

Jyubel was the first one to open his mouth. Marquis Martin replied with a light smile.

“That isn’t the case.”

“I’m pretty busy these days but I’m willing to talk if Marquis Martin-nim requires it. But the fact that you called the Laius company as well.....do you want something specifically?”

“It’s not something great. There’s just something interesting.”

“Something interesting?”

“Let’s start with the introduction. This young man is Ark. He is the one who received the titles of Beltana and Athamas’ Hero so you must’ve heard of him. Not long ago he became the administrator of S-20.”

“I’m curious about what the interesting thing you mention is.”

Jyubel didn’t even both looking at Ark. Ark felt like a dog being ignored but he didn’t pay attention to it. The reason for this meeting wasn’t to socialize. Marquis Martin laughed softly at Jyubel’s words and said.

“Like Marquis Jyubel-nim said, I’m quite idle these days. Therefore I decided to observe some military exercises. Just before I went out with the 1st special division for some training manoeuvres. While training, I passed by this friend’s sector and was exposed to an unexpected incident. I think Marquis Jyubel-nim and Vice President-nim will be interested in this incident.”

“I wonder why you think we would be interested.”

“You’ll understand once you see it. Ark, start.”

Ark nodded and touched his Nymphe. A 3D image then emerged before the eyes of the four people gathered.

Thump, thump, thump, thump!

There was a continuous thumping sound. It was the sound of thousands of soldiers landing on Mt. Fargo! They were the elite warriors of the 1st special division. When they appeared the chaotic users paled with fear.

“How did they.....this.....”

Bain’s reaction wasn’t that different from the chaotic users around him. They were about to kill all the pioneers in the sector when these soldiers had suddenly appeared. It was difficult for them to grasp the situation. Then one of the soldiers walked up to Ark.

“Are you the sector administrator?”

“Yes, I am Ark the administrator of S-20.”

“I’m the leader of the 1st special division, Croc. We were practicing some training manoeuvres when we witnessed this scene by chance. Sectors aren’t under the jurisdiction of the special division but we can’t just enough this emergency. Can you tell me the details about the situation?”

“It is like you can see.”

Ark indicated towards Bain and the chaotic users.

“These armed bandits are on the verge of attacking the sector. As you can see, this is just a small sector so there isn’t a relay antenna to request help from the federation.”

“So these people are thieves.”

“Yes, please help us.”

Ark replied with a smile.

Their situation was cleaned up with those words.

“This is the 1st special division! It is an emergency! Stop the training and exterminate these thieves! Change the scope to criminal identification and handle these guys!”

Tutung! Tutung! Tutung!

After hearing Croc’s orders, the backpacks of thousands of soldiers opened and capsules soared out. They revolved in the air and the battle suits covered the bodies of the soldiers. The thousands of soldiers in battle suits rushed forward.

“Heok! They’re coming!”

“Dammit! How can we deal with these guys?”

“Shit! I shouldn’t have come to this place!”

The chaotic users rushed back and forth while screaming. However there was no option to surrender so they had no other choice. Even if they surrendered, they had to pay an enormous penalty and would be imprisoned. They decided it was better to fight. The chaotic users came to that realization and determinedly lifted their swords and guns.....

Tutututu! Pepeng! Chwajijijijik!

They were smashed. This battle wasn't a fight in the first place. Usually in virtual reality games the NPCs had lower attack power than the users. However not all NPCs were the same. In RPGs weren't there lords and kings? It was common sense for them to have strong guardsmen.

–The demon showed up! It is impossible with our power! Warrior-nim, help us!

They were talking to the guardsmen. The King would send his warriors to defeat the demon.

‘They need to have a lot of skills to take care of demons.....’

Any user who played RPGs knew about this. It was inevitable in order to balance out the game. Of course, virtual reality games were more realistic than classic RPGs. If a user collected troops then they could even cause a coup d'état. In other words, there always needed to be a balance between users who steadily raised their levels and NPCs. In this world the strongest soldiers were aligned with the highest power! Now these soldiers were in S-20.

They were the guard division that defended the Emperor of the galactic federation. The strongest unit of the galactic federation! They were the strongest NPCs so users who had only been levelling for 5~6 months weren't a match for them. It was the same for the chaotic users.

“How can we beat battle suits like that?”

“Those bastards aren't getting damaged!”

“Hik! A particle gun! 50% of my health flew away at once!”

The chaotic users screamed. The pioneers at S-20 weren't just watching either. Although some were gathered at S-20 to find gallstones, a vast majority of them were chaotic hunters. The pioneers couldn't miss this opportunity.

“Wow! Look at all the items falling!”

“It is like a lottery! Now isn't the time to just be watching!”

“This is an opportunity! Use everything!”

The pioneers entered the battle as well! 2,000 pioneers had gathered at S-20 but some prominent users had arrived as chaotic hunters. Among them were users with a superior performance that Ark hadn't expected.

“Thousand lights! Spear Smash!”

A user twisted a spear with rays of light on both sides. It was the user who reached the top 10 in the PVP arena tournament.

“Go! Sweep through them!”

Not far away Park was manipulating his Nymph. He controlled the autobots. The dinosaur shaped one was a defensive autobot while the other one was used to attack. However the one who showed the most unique fighting style was the woman called Kaya.

“That damn bitch!”

“DNA transformation!”

“Huk! What, what the? My hair and body, why.....Bark! Bark!”

Kaya launched something at a chaotic user and he turned into a puppy. He waves his tail and barked until he was stabbed to death with a rapier. It had been more than 5 months and they were using skills he had never seen before.

“Bring it on! This great Hoover will slaughter all of you!”

Well, there was one user who kept on bragging. Anyway, so many well-known users fighting in the same place was a truly spectacular sight! They weren't organized like the special soldiers but their colourful technology cornered the chaotic users. And.....

“Khafra Fencing 3rd style! Galaxy Sword!”

Kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa!

Ark couldn't be left behind.

Dozens of swords crossed the battlefield!

“Armour armament! Hyper Booster!”

The battle suit clad Ark flew around the chaotic users like a flash of light. The blue sword swept around in a geometric pattern. Three or four chaotic users fell at the same time.

“That person is Ark.....”

Ark didn't know the surrounding pioneers. But there was no one gathered in S-20 who didn't know Ark. He was the sector manager but prior to that he had received the titles of Beltana and Athamas' Hero! Any user on Istana would've heard of him at least once. And now Ark was unleashing flash sword techniques. He wasn't doing this to show off.

‘If a chaotic user dies then they will unconditionally drop one equipment!’

Chaotic users wouldn't wear cheap equipment. When he was hunting them in the dungeon, he gained at least a minimum of 100 gold from each equipment. Now there were 2,000 chaotic users in front of him. It was a money field! Moving gold!

“Shield Emission!”

Naturally Ark became stronger.

“Defense Break! Set Bullets Shooting!”

In this situation he was 150%, no 200% stronger.

“Khafra Fencing 3rd style! Galaxy Sword!”

Some aliens would turn into a giant monkey by looking at the moon but for Ark it was gold! Gold warmed his mind and body. And the ones that met Ark’s expectations the most in this battle were Mellin and Hegel. Mellin was an old NPC so his strength, stamina and agility were far below all the other members. Instead his wisdom and intelligence was high. Therefore Mellin’s training in the Silver Hand focused on handling explosives. By the end of the training he was an expert with explosives.

But explosives couldn’t be used that often in combat. It was hard for bombs to have a big effect in a 1-on-1 battle so it wasn’t used when dealing with monsters. A bomb only had an effect against lots of people. Like right now!

“I’ll show you what an old man can do!”

Kwa kwa kwang, kwa kwa kwang, kwa kwa kwang!

Mellin ran around and caused explosions all over the square. The chaotic users were already damaged by the soldiers’ attacks so the bombs instantly killed a lot of them. The other pioneers noticed and started becoming more aggressive. This was a battle situation. However there were some disadvantages to this massacre.

“An equipment!”

“The first person who picks it up will be the owner!”

The chaotic users were dying and dropping all kinds of items! Everybody was striking recklessly so it was hard to tell who had the right to the loot. Therefore pioneers flocked like hyenas every time an item fell. This was where Hegel, the youngest of the Royal Guards showed his skill!

“Item detected!”

Hegel shouted as his eyes became even bigger. This was Hegel's special ability to detect items that he learnt from Heksu of the Silver Hand! He had the ability to spot even a loose screw that had fallen from the body.

“.....Collect the loot!”

Hegel flew to where the body of chaotic user was riddled with bullets. And while the body was falling.....the pioneers hadn't even noticed the loot had dropped before Hegel swept it up with swift hand movements. His speed at picking up items even surpassed Ark! That scene made him reassess the value of a Scavenger. Of course the other members weren't just watching.

Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu! Pepeng!

They had navigated numerous battlefields under Ark's leadership. Berad and Ralph were the main attackers while Cupa, Hedro, Reben and Konsed supported them with gunfire. Meanwhile Kalliben and Beleol acted as snipers. And leading them was Ark who was 200% stronger than usual!

“Dark Eden! Make the formation and burst into enemy lines! If you spot any hit by the special soldiers then take care of them! Mellin, Hegel, continue demonstrating the skills that the Silver Hand taught you! Pick up the items pouring out. Don't worry about doing anything else. Look in every corner and collect everything you can! This is a chance to solve S-20's economic problem!”

“Ohhhhhh!”

The Royal Guards cried out and continued moving through the battlefield. His overwhelming leadership and actions unintentionally branded the name 'Ark' on those watching. Anyway, it was a one-sided battle. There were 4,000 special division soldiers present in S-20. They alone would've already decided the chaotic users' fates. When combined with the pioneers burning to make money, the 2,000 chaotic users didn't stand a chance. They couldn't even escape.

“Damn, I’m going to give up!”

“I’d rather run away since my odds of living will be higher!”

Some tried to escape in the chaos. However.....

Kwa kwa kwa kwa! Kwa kwa kwa kwa!

The shells dropped down from the airships. Any chaotic users that sneaked out of a certain range were turned to rags by the shells. Water was still flowing in the dungeon so they couldn’t hide there again. 20 minutes after it began, the sound of gunfire gradually stopped. Water also stopped pouring out. Finally all the chaotic users had been wiped out.

“T-this.....unbelievable.....”

There was only 1 person from the other side still alive. The one surveying the corpses of the chaotic users was Bain. The only thing that differentiated friend from foe was the chaotic marker. Bain organized his situation but he hadn’t PKed anyone so his name was normal. Thanks to that he was able to survive.....

“Now what shall I do with you?”

Ark grinned as he headed towards Bain. Bain stared at him with horrified eyes before shouting.

“I-I don’t know! I don’t have anything to do with these guys!”

“Do you think I will believe that?”

“I don’t know anything!”

“This bastard still hasn’t come to his senses!”

Berad threatened him with a hammer.

“What, what the? Were you about to hit me? I’m not the culprit! I’m a director of the Laius company! Are you going to kill me with the federation soldiers watching?”

“This bastard!”

“Aren’t you going to hit me? Huhuhu! Of course not! I’m not a criminal! And of course the Laius company doesn’t know anything about this! Y-yes! They stormed into the research centre and threatened me. That’s it! I’m not saying anything else. Call me a lawyer! That is the law!”

“Damn that guy.....”

The pioneers and special soldiers looked at him with outraged expressions. But like Bain said, he wasn’t chaotic. A general NPC couldn’t be convicted in a court of law if they weren’t chaotic. If someone tried to kill Bain then they would become chaotic.

“Damn, I can’t stand it! Hyung-nim, I have to kill him even if I become chaotic!”

“It doesn’t matter.”

Ark interrupted Berad and shook his head. He smiled and passed something to Bain.

“Yes, I understand what you’re saying. The law is the law. By the way, is that yours?”

“Eh? This is.....heok! T-this.....!”

Bain checked what Ark handed him and screamed. He was holding a grenade in his hands. The grenade had the safety pin removed. Bain freaked out and the grenade exploded near Ark.

“You asshole.....what are you doing?”

“Is this the time to be saying that?”

Ark smiled and lifted his arms.

“You hit my arm with the shrapnel from the grenade.”

He pointed to the blood on his wrists and said to Croc.

“As you can see he just threw a grenade at me. What would happen if I kill him now?”

“It would be self-defence.”

Croc grinned and replied. Under Galaxian law, he wouldn't be penalized if the opponent struck first. They completely ignored the fact that Ark was the one who handed Bain the grenade. The fact that Bain's name turned grey was evidence of that.

“Then I have no choice.”

Ark's approached Bain with his lightsaber.

“T-this is ridiculous! It was your grenade! You tricked me! You all saw it! He is trying to kill me!”

But nobody responded. Ark kept on stepping forward. Bain winced and fell flat on the ground while shouting.

“S-save me! I'm not a pioneer! I really will die! Please spare my life! I just obeyed the orders from above! Really! I have evidence! I'll tell you everything just don't kill me! This.....”

Pajijjik!

There was a static noise and the 3D image disappeared. The atmosphere felt several times heavier than before. Jyubel and the Vice President's faces looked like they were constipated. They kept an eye on the place where the video disappeared. Ark hit his Nymphe with a shifty expression.

“Eh? What is this? Wasn't it a HD ultra-sharp image?”

“Huh! What happened to the data? I called some busy people here but I can't even show them the most important part?”

Marquis Martin bowed to the two of them and said.

“I'm sorry. Please wait a moment and we'll correct it immediately.”

“There is no need to go through all that trouble.”

“Don’t you want to see the more interesting parts?”

“No, right now it is sufficiently interesting.”

Marquis Jyubel said and nodded.

“I understand the reason why Marquis Martin called us. That is definitely a fascinating video.”

“So I was thinking about showing a few more people. On TV as well as being shown in the central parliament. This friend is in a difficult situation these days. The copyright income for this video should help him settle these funding problems. Well, that’s only if this friend manages to recover the data.”

“I said there is no need.”

“Is that so?”

“Yes, that is enough.”

Marquis Jyubel looked at Ark who was fiddling with his Nymph. If he had a gun then a hole would’ve pierced Ark’s smiling face.

“It was an interesting video so I’m thankful. You seem to be in quite a difficult situation so I’ll give you a little help in return. I have a lot of power so I can be quite helpful. The Laius’ Vice President-nim also thinks the same thing. Isn’t that right?”

“Yes.....that seems to be the case.”

The Vice President responded with a rotten expression. Then Jyubel’s eyes shifted towards Marquis Martin.

“I promise. I will make you more profit. And I would also like to express my sincerity to Marquis Martin-nim.....”

“We can talk about that later.”

“I think that would be great. Then we understand that the video won’t be screened. If you have no other requests then excuse me. I have to process the reward to give to that friend. Vice President-nim, let’s go.”

Jyubel stood up and the Vice President quickly followed. He grabbed the doorknob and was about to leave. Marquis Martin lifted his mug with a relaxed expression and said.

“This is my personal opinion but....if it is slightly difficult to handle the important matter then you can use my subordinate.”

“I will keep that in mind.”

Marquis Jyubel replied in a low voice before leaving the room. Ark stopped messing with his Nymph and looked at Marquis Martin.

“Why did you talk about a difficult work?”

“You don’t need to worry about those words.”

Marquis Martin laughed and continued.

“Anyway, this is more than I expected.”

“It is all thanks to Marquis Martin-nim. But I’m also slightly astonished. I never imagined that the 1st special division would show up.”

“That is the only possible way without Jyubel interfering.”

In fact, that was something he had been most worried about. Ark had noticed Bain’s plan one day before the event. Ark immediately boarded the Silver Star and flew to Tatuine to meet with Marquis Martin. There was no meaning in evacuating the dungeon of pioneers. However that wouldn’t solve the fundamental problem. If the chaotic users attacked then the population would decline again. Ark thought of the Water Cleaning strategy by connecting the lake to the underground tunnel but there was a significant risk with that.

‘Will that stop those guys?’

Of course, if they invading the sector then he could request help from the federation. But if he contacted them after the trouble happened then the sector had no choice but to receive damage. That's why he requested Marquis Martin's help in advance. But there was a problem. Marquis Martin was being monitored by Jyubel. The situation hadn't happen yet so Marquis Martin had no justification to move troops to S-20 and Jyubel would notice. If Bain cancelled his plan then Marquis Martin would be the one embarrassed.

That's why Marquis Martin thought of the 1st special division. Unlike other federation units, the 1st special division was stationed at Tatuine and could move straight away. Marquis Martin used the excuse of a training exercise to move the 1st special division. The success was shown on the video.

"But is this okay?"

"The fact that we didn't reveal the video until the end?"

"No, I'm aware of the reasons for that."

Ark had cut the video right after using the excuse of self-defence with Bain. Bain had confessed who was behind the incident. It was evidence that implicated Jyubel and the Vice President of Laius in this event. He knew that he might be thrown away after the work was finished so he secretly collected evidence. And it was all stored in Ark's Nymph. Despite that, there was a simple reason he stopped the video. The important thing was that Jyubel and the Vice President knew that they had evidence. There was no reason to reveal the details.

They knew there was evidence but they didn't know the extent. That would pressure Jyubel and the Vice President even more. In addition, the two of them might become even more dangerous if they were cornered. So it was better to compromise at an appropriate level. Ark's thoughts were the same as Marquis Martin's in this regard.

“But they didn’t clearly promise anything.”

“It is enough.”

Marquis Martin laughed and continued.

“If they replied differently than they would be admitting to the crime. So they used the word reward. And you don’t need to worry about the size of the reward. The damage the Laius Vice President received from this event is difficult to predict. So obviously they will give you a satisfactory return. Of course, I’m also expecting some rewards.”

Marquis Martin’s careless words made Jyubel seem pitiful. Marquis Martin looked at Ark and said.

“There is another problem.”

“Another problem?”

“Like I mentioned before, the galaxy is investigating the magic circle. It is a disconcerting matter. As expected, the Aschulat and Rama investigated the matter. All 3 powers are organizing agents to investigate so the situation is heating up.”

That was something Ark expected. The same quest was given to all agents in the galaxy. If they completed that quest then the reward from their respective power would be staggering. Fierce competition was a natural process. Marquis Martin said the competition was heating up but it was no different from a war

‘Well I don’t care what those guys are doing but.....’

He was worried about Irina. She was investigating something that other atrocious pioneers were. He couldn’t feel comfortable thinking of Irina being surrounded by enemies.

“The federation has decided to send a 2nd intelligence battalion to assist the first one. I would like you to join the team.”

In other words, Marquis Martin wanted to take the initiative. Ark had no intention of refusing.

“The problem is that place.”

He was worried about Irina and it was a main quest so Ark had to participate. He would also be backed by Marquis Martin. However there was no guarantee when this mission would end once he started. He still needed to clean up the remnants of Jyubel and Laius’ plan. Ark had to remain in S-20 until that was taken care of.

“I’m not telling you to go straight away.”

Marquis Martin also knew about it and nodded.

“Parliament will require a bit of time to determine the agents. The future results are unknown so all nobles are eager to get involved. So they are all eager to nominate their agents for the 2nd investigation unit. It should take at least a week to arrange. You have until then to finish all your preparations.”

‘A week.....’

That wasn’t a lot of time. But he had no choice.

“Understood.”

“Then I’ll see you in one week.”

Marquis Martin laughed and lifted his teacup again.

“I want to finish this so you can leave first. Everything will probably be organized by the time you reach your sector. Because Jyubel doesn’t have a very laid back personality.”

Martin Marquis said.

“Ark, check this out!”

Mellin came rushing out as soon as Ark arrived in S-20.

“The auditor and a staff member of the Laius company just visited. And they gave me these forms. Look. Here. Now all our problems are resolved!”

Mellin extruded 2 pieces of paper with an excited expression.

This is a notification stating that the Laius company will be taking responsibility for all of S-20's facilities.

Under the order of Marquis Martin, Minister of Domestic Affairs has ordered that the audit of S-20 has been tentatively postponed. And Laius will take care of S-20's security, disaster prevention and sanitary facilities.

This was the document that the auditor brought.

S-20 has been chosen as a sector that will receive Laius' support.

Laius often gives financial support to small or medium sized sectors that are struggling. Researchers had judged that S-20's development is richer than other small sectors and will receive Laius' support.

All privileges from Laius' research centre will be rented to Administrator Ark-nim for an indefinite period. And any facilities demanded by the Domestic Affairs Department will be funded by the Laius company. Finally, the Laius company will pay for all damages caused by the stolen airship without going through the insurance company.

All of this support won't have any conditions attached.

I hope for the continuous development of your sector.

This was the document an employee of the Laius company brought.

“They hope for continuous development of the sector.....”

The Vice President probably wanted to add ‘ㄟ_ㄟ’ after it. Like Marquis Martin said, Jyubel's processing speed was LTeX2. He pretended to be unconcerned in the meeting room but he had actually been uneasy about

it. Yet the compensation was more than Ark expected. All of S-20's problems would be settled in one shot and he would also obtain the funds from the Laius' research centre. The paper also said it was an indefinite lease so it could last forever! It was like they handed over the research centre for nothing.

'I wouldn't have obtained this if I was too greedy.'

That's why Marquis Martin hadn't directly asked for compensation. Not stating anything specific meant he could get everything. Jyubel and the Vice President gave him as much privileges as possible. He wouldn't have obtained this if he had been too greedy. Of course, Ark never would've done such a foolish thing. He had no intention of missing a chance like this. Luck and timing was also a skill!

'This is perfect timing!'

That's why Ark.....

-The administrator of S-20 has applied for an extension.

This message was sent to the sector administration department.

'The research centre is mine but it is situated outside the sector. If thieves storm it then I can't ask the federation for help. And I don't have the troops to prevent a large scale raid. I can only rest assured if the research centre is included in the sector.'

This was the first reason. And the second reason was the security facilities. The equipment required for the <Audit Command> quest was already present in the research centre. If he expanded the sector then he also needs to expand the security facilities to match the larger territory. Ark had allocated funds for this but now he could leave it to the Laius company. There also weren't a lot of casualties thanks to the special division soldiers. After the unprecedented battle of 2,000 chaotic users, the news

spread and the population increased drastically as curious users visited the sector. Therefore Ark's extension application was accepted.

Thanks to that, the sector became 1 km wider and the Laius company had to build a shield around it. The Vice President's sentiment of 'ㄗ_ㄗ' probably changed to 'ㄗ_ㄗ'. But the official documents had already been sent so it couldn't be taken back even if he wanted to.

Ku ku ku kung! Ku ku ku kung! Pepeng!

The next day large scale construction began in the sector. Laius had completed a 10 storey research centre in 10 days. Once the large company started construction, a 2 metre high fence was quickly built around the sector and was equipped with automatic turrets and a high density shield generator. This meant all the security facilities had been completed! Disaster prevention facilities such as earthquake sensors were also installed. It wasn't necessary to apply for sanitary facilities. As expected, the research centre already had most of the facilities. The time spent on construction was just 3 days!

-The <Audit Command> quest has been completed.

At the same time the quest was completed. The shops damaged by the airship crash were also repaired! In the meantime Ark also bought the Fairy and exclusive route. Ark was able to save that type of money because of the chaotic users. It was thanks to the chaotic battle. He took the initiative during the battle but Ark was still the sector manager. The rights of the soldiers who fought belonged to Ark. He took advantage of that and was able to obtain exclusive loot from the chaotic users.

Hegel's skill also couldn't be ignored. At the time 10,000 people had gathered so it was a confusing battle. Streams of water pouring out also made the items more difficult to find. However Hegel had received special training as a Scavenger from the NPC Heksu of the Silver Hand. Hegel's distinctive

large eyes didn't miss a single item. Ark managed to collect 400 items! The value was worth 6,000 gold. Ark had already secure 5,000 gold but he used that money to buy the Fairy and exclusive route. But the biggest loot Ark got from this event.....

“Hello Ark-nim!”

Bain bowed so low his nose almost hit the ground.

“I've finished resetting all the data of the research centre and now Ark-nim is the top administrator. The research centre truly belongs to Ark-nim now!”

Bain exclaimed as he pointed to the research centre. The signpost in front of the research centre had already been changed to ‘Sector S-20's Management Office.’

Ark grinned and nodded.

“Good work.”

“I don't deserve those words! I tried to do such despicable things to Ark-nim yet you forgave me! In the future I will only be loyal to Ark-nim!”

There was a reason for Bain's attitude. Marquis Martin, Ark, Jyubel and the Laius Vice President. The 4 people had commenced their talk shortly after the ‘chaotic attack.’ He didn't hand Bain over to the courts. But Bain was scared of something else. Jyubel and the Vice President suffered a big loss and Bain was a weakness to them. Of course he would take the fall. Thus they fired Bain. He quickly grabbed an opportunity!

“I will obey everything you say! Just let me be your subordinate! Please! If Ark-nim doesn't accept then I won't live for long! The only person who can help me is Ark-nim! If you tell me to bark then I will bark!”

Bain was quick at judging the situation. His life would continuously be threatened by Jyubel and the Vice President. The only way he could survive was to cling tightly to Ark. Ark had a secret deal with Jyubel and the Vice

President. They wouldn't dare do anything if Bain was Ark's subordinate. The proposition wasn't bad for Ark.

'The research centre is mine but I don't know the facilities yet.'

The Laius Vice President hadn't attached any documentation about the research centre. If Bain was there then he could use the centre's capabilities at 100%. Bain was an incredible lifeline to Ark! He didn't need to worry about betrayal.

"In addition, he was a direction of Laius. That means he is a NPC with the ability to manage.'

Originally Ark had left sector management to Mellin and Hegel. However he saw the situation after returning from Amara and determined that it was impossible to leave it to them. If it wasn't for Rapid then the population would've plummeted drastically.

'In that sense Rapid is the right person.....'

However Rapid hadn't come back despite a fortnight passing. Even if Rapid returned, he was still a user. He wouldn't be able to stay at the sector all the time. But it was impossible for Ark to stay at S-20.

"Okay. I accept."

"R-really? You really accept?"

"But if you even think of....."

"I will never! My allegiance will always be with you!"

-Bain has joined Dark Eden
as an intern.Name: Bain
(NPC ☆ ☆) Occupation: Clerk

Level: 110 Related Skills: Paperwork, Information

Processing.....

Bain became an employee of Dark Eden. Bain wasn't the only new increase to his employees.

"You've become my subordinate but I can't guarantee your safety. You understand how powerful the opponents are right? So I am giving you a bodyguard for the moment. Kurakan, you stay here with Bain for a while."

"I understand Hyung-nim."

Kurakan tapped Bain's shoulder with a smile.

"Huhuhu. There is no need to worry. Other than Ark hyung-nim, I have never lost to another pioneer. No one will touch you with me here. Hyung-nim, then I have become Hyung-nim's subordinate?"

"Well you played your role well."

He used Kurakan's body to lure the chaotic hunters. And Ark had been thinking about accepting Kurakan. Kurakan was an idiot but Ark spent quite a bit of time watching him. His skills might be a disadvantage but he never gave up and was extremely loyal to Ark. It wasn't common for a user to keep his promise of doing 100 hours of community service. Therefore he was a reliable user.

-Kurokan has joined Dark Eden as an intern.

Name: Kurakan (User) Occupation: Assaulter

Level: 98 Related Skills: Charge, Rampage, Heavy artillery.....

Milan and the Royal Guards were 11 NPCs.

He also brought in Jay and Tori so he had 2 NPC engineers. And he left the research centre and sector management to Bain. Kurakan was the first

user registered. Dark Eden was now filled with 15 people.

‘I can increase the level of the agent.’

Adventure points were required to raise the level of his agent. Ark had already collected the necessary Adventure points. It was the same for S-20.

“How about it? Do you like it?”

Bain asked nervously as he noticed Ark’s expression. Bain had guided them around and Ark was now standing on a balcony.

‘This is my entire sector?’

The balcony overlooked the entire sector! The sector was twice its previous size and was wrapped in a blue shield. The extension meant Mt. Fargo was no fully owned by Ark with a lot of pioneers hunting there. The shops damaged from the airship crash were repaired and the Fairy and exclusive route attracted more pioneers.

That wasn’t all.

A large artificial lake was next to the research centre. The lake was filled with dozens of fish that the octopuses could catch. They were the workers from Charem’s food factory. Once the situation in S-20 was clean up, Ark had moved the Charenjok and space food manufacturing to S-20. When Ark first came there was only one signpost in the sector. Now it had all the essential facilities, an artificial lake and a research centre.

Sector Management Information Window

Sector Code: S-20 Sector Rating: Lv. 2

Sector Range: 2 kilometres around the entrance of Mt. Fargo.

Sector Manager: Ark (Agent: Dark Eden)

Number of Stores: 15 (7: Duty-free shops, 8: 5% tax of the income)

Population: 3,480

Sector Assets: 1,460 gold

Related Facilities: Research Centre, Fairy, Exclusive Route, Relay Antennas (laboratory facility) and food manufacturing factory.

So he levelled up! S-20 was finally able to grow to a small sector with a Lv. 2 rating. New employees meant he had to relocate his other staff. Once Bain took over sector managed, he entrusted the food manufacturing plant to Mellin. Jay and Tori returned to their primary occupations as engineers and oversaw the related tasks of the research centre. The Royal Guards were appointed as formal sector guards.

‘I’d like to watch the situation of the sector a bit more.....’

He had to meet Marquis Martin in one week. And it took 3 days to clean-up S-20. There was still 4 days left but Ark had something he needed to do.

‘Four days isn’t an abundant amount of time I can leave the rest of the sector to the staff and go complete my business.’

Ark’s mission. It was an adventure to an unknown world.

“Dammit!”

Rapid sighed with misery. His cold had worsened and he needed to be taken to the hospital. However the thing that made it difficult was Rapid’s father. His father had stopped Rapid’s connection to Galaxian when he became sick. This was the reason why Rapid failed for log in for a fortnight. But

Rapid desperately persuaded his father and he could return to Galaxian. And once again to S-20.....

“Did something happen in the meantime?”

The sector was completely changed from what he remembered. What happened while he was away? It wasn't difficult to figure out. He also knew the pioneers in the sector so he could easily here the matter. That's why Rapid was upset. He wanted to meet Ark. He wanted to check the answer. He wanted to know. Why could he never win over Ark? What was the difference between him and me?

‘I wonder.’

He wanted to meet Ark again. In the past Rapid tried everything he could to defeat Ark but it didn't work so he wanted to ask in S-20. Naturally he knew what was required to grow a sector. The crisis could only be solved with money. However Ark didn't spend any money. He had found ways to resolve the funding issue while still obtaining something from poor users. The process was more important than the results. But Rapid had spent that time in a hospital bed. The problem was.....

“He left last night.”

“Left? To where?”

“He didn't tell me.”

He took several subordinates with him so I don't know when he will come back. It was great that Rapid managed to return.

‘Now what do I do?’

Rapid was signing with disappointment when a message appeared.

-A new message has arrived.

The Nymphe vibrated and a new message came up. His forehead frowned as he confirmed the message without thinking.

“What the? Why all of a sudden.....?”

My Land!

“Uhh!”

“Oooh!”

In the secret underground facility of the NIS. Eerie moans kept on being heard from the underground room. However there was no sympathy in the eyes of the man in his 30s. He just clicked his tongue instead.

“Hey, are they really special agents?”

“I’m ashamed.”

A man with swollen eyes said as he scratched his head.

“These days the army is so soft that it no different from a kindergarten. But aren’t they the special forces of the NIS? The NIS agents that can withstand torture can only do this much?”

“Hyung-nim, are we the mafia? This isn’t a military dictatorship. If we do that than the agents will be unhappy. You should know that.”

“I don’t know. All I know is that the supposedly elite agents of the NIS are whining like children. I’ll say this. It doesn’t matter if the meat on their bones is torn off like wolves ate it. They had to do it without complaining or withdrawing.”

“Hyung-nim really is special.”

“That is my nature.”

The man answered in a curt tone before standing up.

“Seeing these guys moaning in the darkness is distracting. I’m going to smoke a cigarette.”

Hyung-nim, cigarettes are full of nickel, arsenic, benzene, cadmium, carcinogens etc. Please think about your health.”

“Are you a NIS agent or the ambassador for a no-smoking campaign? Is this really the voice of a NIS employee?”

“I might be an NIS employee but I’m still a person. In addition, I’m also the head of my family.”

“Yes, you have to worry about messes on the wall and other crap. I’m a bachelor so I can smoke.”

The man then went outside. He took out a cigarette and started smoking.

“Dammit, what am I doing now?”

The man smoking was Lee Myung-ryong. He had suddenly been contacted by the NIS a week ago. At first Lee Myung-ryong thought the call had something to do with Gwon Hwa-rang. The tycoon and politicians were probably being shielded by the NIS. Then Kang Ho-cheol who guided him around the NIS blatantly provoked him. The NIS was quite a scary place. The provocation had impure motives behind it. The problem was that Lee Myung-ryong was a person born without fear. His DNA was made for battles! The person who called him Hyung-nim in the underground facility was Kang Ho-cheol. His swollen eye was the work of Lee Myung-ryong.

-Today Daddy met a superman.

That was what Kang Ho-cheol told his two daughters after coming home. Well, Lee Myung-ryong turned his face into a swollen rice cake so he needed something to explain to his two daughters. Then Lee Myung-ryong heard an explanation that he never expected.

“This isn’t a SF movie. Lucifer’s recovery.....”

He honestly still couldn’t believe it. An artificial intelligence existed in the game. He already died once and now he rose again just to take over the nuclear power plant and threaten the government? How could he believe that? But it was true. And the NIS had already made preparations to deal with it.

‘In my eyes, the headquarters looks more like a game room than an emergency task force room.’

That was the underground facility he had just been in. There were 300 capsules that connected to Galaxian and the 300 personnel were either in the capsules or eating.

“You’ll be joining this team. This is a state of emergency for the country. We’ve contacted the Gangnam police office and will provide you with a room and meals. Needless to say, this is a confidential matter. You can’t reveal anything about this situation to anyone.”

So Lee Myung-ryong joined the Lucifer Hunting team.

‘At this rate I won’t be able to fulfil Hwa-rang hyung-nim’s request.’

The request from Gwon Hwa-rang surfaced in his head. Lee Myung-ryong could determine the severity of the issue. And he was a civil servant. Gwon Hwa-rang’s request couldn’t take precedence over the country’s state of emergency.

‘But what can I do? I have experience but I’m not a person who originally enjoyed playing games. I was just thrown into New World. There are already strong people dealing with the emergency situation than why am I needed? What can I teach them?’

But it was different than he expected. He joined the team and watched for a few days.

“I don’t understand the situation but I clearly know what they are lacking.”

“What’s that?”

“It is will! That is what this team is lacking.”

“That is ridiculous. They are all agents specially trained to hunt Lucifer. They went through a myriad of training without sleep, counterterrorism manoeuvres and constant high intensity training. I can’t accept the fact that

they lack willpower.”

“Why is that?”

“T-that is.....”

“Frankly there isn’t a large difference in my skills compared to theirs. The difference is in practical experience. The NIS agents have quite a bit of fighting experience. But there is a difference in our fighting experience. I worked in a SWAT team and fought criminals every single day. Our experience is very different.”

“But they are Lucifer hunting agents.....”

“Training is training. Do you understand? Actual fighting is different from training.”

“But how can they possible match a veteran with 25 year’s experience? Where can they gain practical experience fighting with guns in South Korea?”

“So I will show them actual fighting from now on.”

The members of the Lucifer hunting team weren’t afraid of death. The country was in a crisis! They couldn’t be scared! They had to stop Lucifer even if they needed to step over the corpses of their fellow soldiers. The personnel who committed to this weren’t afraid of death.

.....That was the problem.

“So you’re not afraid of death? Don’t joke around. Isn’t that just fighting bravely? Those guys would just die. And the troops would be -1. That is troublesome. The most important thing in a fight is survival. If you survive then you can fire one more bullet. If you don’t understand that then you will just be playing at fighting.”

“But how can they learn not to fight bravely?”

“They will have to learn with their bodies.”

Once again, the virtual reality capsule moderated pain. The game was a realistic experience but the users would just receive a small shock in place of the pain. But even that small shock could cause irritation.

‘This is the reason why they’re not afraid of death. They aren’t desperate to survive. That’s because it is a game so they don’t need to survive. I need to fix that mindset.’

They had the right person. Lee Myung-ryong became the team leader after joining the team.

“That sounds like fun.”

Lee Myung-ryong’s eyes glittered as he heard a description of the situation.

“It might be difficult to change the game system but this is just converting a hardware. All you need to do is amplify the signal. This really is a brilliant idea. As expected, you understand everything without me having to describe it.

“The pain.....”

“Huhuhu, my body went through it as well.”

The capsule was remodelled under his orders. In the renovated capsules the pain values were realistic. If the character received damage then it would feel 100% real. In other words, they really would feel it if shot by a bullet or their limbs were cut off. That’s why screams rang out in the underground facility.

“Aaaaaaack!”

Since then the team members started their hellish hours. Now Galaxian was no longer a game for them. How could it be a game when they suffered the pain of a broken limb? The only difference was that their bodies would revive. It wasn’t a wonderful thing. It meant that terrible pain needed to be repeated. Naturally the attitudes of the agents in the game changed by 180 degrees.

‘I can’t rush blindly even if the monster is weak. I don’t want to experience that terrible pain again. Fighting without being injured would be the best. I have to avoid any blows that will deal serious injury. I have to do whatever it takes to survive!’

They no longer fought with ignorant courage. Their heads thought frantically in order to survive. Then skills they never imagined were created.

-[Evasion (☆ ☆)] skill has been created.

<This increases the probability of a desperate person to avoid enemy gunfire>

-[Safety First (☆ ☆)] skill has been created.

<Damage will reduce and defense increase for a certain period of time>

-[Carefulness (☆ ☆)] skill has been created.

<Situational judgement has increased and damage received from the surrounding environment will be reduced>

These skills were produced by their struggles to avoid pain! This was reflected in their combat power.

-I have to become stronger in order to avoid dying!

Like a movie, the team members became stronger after experiencing death.

“Hyung-nim is a genius!”

Kang Ho-cheol praised Lee Myung-ryong. However the agents had different thoughts.

‘We’re receiving this pain because of that bastard!’

‘What diabolical ideas are running through that head of his?’

‘He is the devil!’

But Lee Myung-ryong wasn’t affected by this. He had suffered this when he first started New World and didn’t know anything about the game. Now the agents playing Galaxian were experiencing it as well.

“To think Hyun-woo was hired for this job.....”

The NIS had commissioned private gamers. Hyun-woo was included among those numbers. It was natural considering Hyun-woo was the strongest player in New World. In addition, he was one of the users who defeated Lucifer. It would be strange if Hyun-woo wasn’t invited.

“Hwa-rang hyung-nim’s request is second at the moment. First I have to meet Hyun-woo to talk about the Lucifer hunting.”

Lee Myung-ryong muttered as he threw his cigarette butt away.

‘Damn.....’

Hyun-woo sighed. Just after the situation in S-20 was put to order. Hyun-woo took Tori out into the universe. He had something to take care of before meeting Marquis Martin again for the intelligence mission. But Ark’s destination couldn’t be reached in 1~2 hours. With warp navigation it would take 20 hours. In other words, he had nothing to do for 20 hours except wait. It was a lot of spare time.

‘Things turned out well. In fact, I postponed the Taek real estate problem in order to play the game.’

To be honest it wasn’t just because of the game. Hyun-woo had already guessed the reason behind the real estate problem. Lucifer was behind the

incident! If he defeated Lucifer then the real estate price might recover and even go higher. The only hope was to reach the ultimate goal in Galaxian before Lucifer. Therefore he put off the rehabilitation members request to go saw the Taek land and immersed himself in the game. Because there was no way to solve the real estate problem in real life. But he couldn't talk about that situation.

‘Yes, I can't put off the matter much longer or the hyung-nims would be worried. I have time now so I should go see them.’

–Yes, you thought well.

–We'll see you soon. We'll take a look around the land.

The hyung-nims were okay. It was good up to there. The problem was the phone call he got just before leaving.

–I am Cho Min-sun.

“Cho Min-sun? I don't know that name.....”

–You might know me as Irina?

Hyun-woo's jaw dropped. It had been 20 days since he met up with Irina on Istana's orbital garrison after the Amara event. Hyun-woo had asked for a date and Irina unexpectedly gave him her phone number. No, Cho Min-sun was her real name and she had promised to meet up when she had time. Now she had called.

‘Don't tell me.....?’

–I'm sorry for the delay. I was quite busy. I know this is a sudden call. Do you have time today?

‘Oh my god!’

Hyun-woo was speechless. He had been waiting for this phone call. His heart wanted to jump out of his chest. However the timing was horrible. Hyun-woo had promised to meet his hyung-nims and was just about to depart for the

Taek mountain region. He had already put off this appointment too many times. And he couldn't cancel the appointment since his hyung-nims had probably already left. But he hadn't been in contact with Cho Min-sun for 20 days. He was extremely worried!

–As expected, was it too abrupt? Then the next opportunity.....

“Ah, no it's fine!”

Hyun-woo shouted frantically. Hyun-woo knew Cho Min-sun's circumstances. Her mother was lying in the ICU. Hyun-woo understand her situation immediately.

‘I've stopped by every time I'm in the hospital but I never see anyone else. Perhaps she grew up with a widowed mother. Or maybe she is a single mother. I don't understand her economic circumstances but it would be difficult for a young woman to take care of the hospital bills by herself. Yes, Min-sun is the same as I was a few years ago. She is probably playing Galaxian in order to gain money. That's the reason why she seems blunt. She's like I was when my mother was first hospitalized.’

Hyun-woo had gone through this situation. So he knew. A person in these circumstances would be very busy. He couldn't miss this chance to meet up with her. Hyun-woo worried for a while before having no choice but to be straightforward.

“I'll tell you honestly. I actually have a previous engagement. I need to meet with my hyung-nims in a province. I've been slightly busy and kept having to postpone so I can't cancel it now. Then would you like to go on a small drive with me?”

–That.....

Cho Min-sun replied in a hesitant voice. Hyun-woo sensed a rejection and was about to sigh.

–That place isn't on an island that requires a ship to get there is it?

“Huh? Ah, no. It is probably a 2 hour drive by car?”

–Then it will be fine.

Cho Min-sun replied in a bright voice. When he called the rehabilitation members they welcomed it immediately.

–This brat, I was wondering about your excuses but you had a reason for it!

–Are you dating again?

–There is no way we would say no if you wanted to bring a woman!

–Aren’t you a player? Bring her. Hyung-nim will boast about you!

Naturally the rehabilitation members were OK!

‘But having my hyungs along during our first date.....’

This was the reason for Hyun-woo’s sigh. It was an unavoidable situation but wasn’t this their first date? And that wasn’t the only thing he was worried about. The rehabilitation members weren’t ordinary. They were former criminals that he called ‘Hyung-nim.’ They were the type where people would reflexively act in self-defence if they were seen on a dark night. He didn’t know whether it was good to introduce his hyung-nims on a first date. It was natural for him to be worried. The rehabilitation hyungs also knew about Kang Mi-su and Jung Hye-sun. If they met Cho Min-sun then there was a chance they could let something slip.

‘This might be a big deal.....’

But the water had already spilled. Now Hyun-woo was driving a car down the freeway with Cho Min-sun sitting next to him. He was now on a date so he had no choice but to see it through.

“Do you feel uncomfortable?”

“Ah no.”

Hyun-woo shook his head and spoke quickly.

“This is our first time meeting outside, no is it the second if we include the party? However we didn’t know each other at that time so this should be the first meeting. I feel sorry because you suddenly have to meet my hyung-nims.”

“No I’m fine. It’s not like Hyun-woo did it on purpose. Rather I am sorry for suddenly contacting you. If I felt uncomfortable then I would’ve refused. I’m not the type of person who won’t speak my mind.”

“I know that as well.”

Hyun-woo laughed and answered.

“You are the type of person who won’t give rations to a starving prisoner because they were missing 0.5 grams of Iridium.”

“If you speak like that then Hyun-woo ssi also did something.”

“Huh? What did I do?”

“You took off your pants in front of me to buy a shovel.”

“Ack! You still remember that?”

“It is a memory I want to forget.”

“Then please forget it. I was desperate at that time.”

“I’m a little surprised though. I thought that Hyun-woo ssi would soon quit the game. Yet you ended up receiving the title of Beltana and Athamas’ Hero and the title of a sector administrator. Galaxian is the first game I’ve played but I know that isn’t an easy thing to achieve.”

“I think that Min-sun ssi is also wonderful. Not anyone can enter the galactic federation. This is your first time playing the game yet you managed to become an executive of the galactic federation. That isn’t something an ordinary user can do.”

“It’s nothing.”

Cho Min-sun replied with a dreary expression. Hyun-woo thought that he made a mistake. He played the game to live. Despite millions of people playing the game in this age, it still didn't have that good of a perception. Many men were reluctant to talk to gamers. Let alone women.

‘Is it okay to speak about this?’

Hyun-woo wondered with an embarrassed expression. Then Cho Min-sun laughed and continued.

“By the way? Haven't we only been talking about Galaxian since we met?”

“Huh? Ah, I'm really sorry. I must seem a bit dull.....”

“It's nothing. I find this convenient. Honestly questions like my hobby and blood type make me uncomfortable. I think it is an advantage that we can talk about our favourite thing seriously.

“I also appreciate that.”

“That doesn't mean you can be too relaxed.”

“I understand. I will put in more effort to raise your impression of me. Please give me the quests.”

“The first quest is to take me home safely.”

“Is this a repeatable quest?”

“That remains to be seen.”

“In the end it will depend on my impression. I understand. I'll accept your first quest! I will 100% complete it!”

Hyun-woo had been quite nervous. His hyung-nims intruded on his first date but that date was actually a burden. A date was needed to progress the relationship but he hadn't known what to talk about. To be honest he had spent 20 minutes choosing a t-shirt and jeans. But that nervousness was solved when they met. No, he even felt comfortable. It was because they had

a common interest. Today he was grateful that Galaxian existed. The thing he was worried about also didn't happen.

“Ohhh! It is a beauty!”

The rehabilitation hyungs were waiting at the meeting point. The rehabilitation members flocked as soon as Hyun-woo stopped the car.

“Nice to meet you! I'm sorry this is so sudden but do you have an older sister?”

“This bastard, where are you forcing your horrible mug?”

“I'm sorry. That guy never learned any manners.”

“What? Then you learnt it as well?”

“I learnt a lot more than you. Please understand. The difference between us is large. He was barely taught not to

“My name is Kang Yoo-jin.”

“Eh? Why did you greet her first? I'm Yoo An-gook.”

“Wait! I'm first! I'm Ma Cho-rong.....”

“Get out you beast!”

The rehabilitation members shouted over the top of each other. In fact, Hyun-woo had felt tense when the rehabilitation members first gathered around Cho Min-sun. Except for 2~3 people, most of them have faces that people would be scared of. However that tension eased with the gag moment of the rehabilitation members.

‘The first checkpoint has been passed?’

Hyun-woo felt relieved.

“Hyung-nims, stop now. How can you expect her to remember your names if you keep on talking over each other? Let's talk about business over a meal.”

“Yes, let’s do that.”

“Is it here?”

Hyun-woo looked over an expanse of grass. Yoo An-gook nodded and pointed to the distant mountain.

“Yes, it is from here up to that mountain. There is no change but I thought you should see it once. Doesn’t it seem different once you actually see it?”

Yoo An-gook was showing him the piece of real estate. Hyun-woo had trusted the real estate to Yoo An-gook so this was the first time he saw the land directly. But Hyun-woo also had an eye for land. In New World he owned his own estate and he even had a sector in Galaxian. From Hyun-woo’s point of view, the land that Yoo An-gook bought wasn’t bad. The scenery was beautiful and it would be situation in the heart of the new city that had been planned.

‘The value of the land now.....’

A sigh naturally emerged. That didn’t change even if he saw the land. The reason he had met the rehabilitation members today wasn’t to come up with a solution. It was to make up an excuse and to have a meal together. After driving around the border of the land, Hyun-woo and the members found a suitable restaurant. And they chatted while eating.

“But why did you come here to look around?”

Cho Min-sun asked. Kang Yoo-jin replied before Hyun-woo.

“What? Hyun-woo, you didn’t tell her were this was?”

“No, that.....”

He had been slightly worried about it. This was their first date and he felt like he would be bragging if he said ‘this is my land.’

Hyun-woo scratched his head awkwardly. Ma Cho-rong laughed and interrupted.

“You don’t know yet. Then I’ll say it. He might look trivial but he is rich in land. That place we toured? That is his land.”

“Huh? That is Hyun-woo’s land?”

“Not only that. He is a director of a large company. Have you heard about a company called Global Exos? He is the director there. MIn-sun ssi caught a proper guy.”

“Hyung-nim, what are you saying?”

“Yes, Ma Cho-rong. Are you drunk? What are you saying?”

“Ah no, I just.....”

Ma Cho-rong examined Hyun-woo and Kang Yoo-jin’s expression and closed his mouth.

“I’m sorry. Like I said previously, this guy hasn’t learnt any manners. I’ll apologize instead?”

“No I’m fine. By the way, isn’t Global Exos the one who made the game called New World? If you’re the director of that company than Hyun-woo really is Ark.....”

“Yes, I am that Ark.”

Hyun-woo sighed and replied.

“I wasn’t hiding it intentionally. I just didn’t have an opportunity to tell you.”

The rehabilitation members were unaware that Hyun-woo was playing Galaxian. But Kang Yoo-jin noticed that he didn’t want to talk about it and changed the subject.

“We’ve known him for quite some time. Now he is the director of a large company but he was going through some troubles when we first met. I won’t explain the details but he just spent his days working part time jobs. So please don’t misunderstand.”

“Yes, that’s right.”

Ma Cho-rong sighed and interrupted.

“Hyun-woo bought the land that he earned with a lot of difficulty. Damn, now problems are occurring here. The Taek Mountain was selected as the location of a new town. Now it is just a bunch of hills!”

Cho Min-sun who had been listening silently asked with surprise.

“What did you say just now?” This is the Taek Mountain region? Here is Taek Mountain?”

“Eh? Do you know it?”

“Ah no, all I know is.....”

Cho Min-sun shook her head. But her complexion had turned pale.

“Are you uncomfortable?”

He eyed Cho Min-sun anxiously who shook her head.

“Ah, it’s nothing. Then Hyun-woo was the owner of that land before?”

“Yes, but he wasn’t the one who bought the land. That friend is a real estate specialist and he purchased the land as investment for Hyun-woo because he heard of the construction of a new town. This might seem like we’re defending Hyun-woo. But it is all true. He bought the land but the land prices plummeted so Hyun-woo is suffering because of his foolish hyungs.”

Yoo-jin hyung, why is hyung talking like this?”

“Yes! It isn’t our fault that the land value fell!”

Then Ma Cho-rong shouted angrily.

“It is thanks to the politicians and businessmen who bought the land and then sold it. That’s why the land prices fell. The land value inflated because of the new construction and then it was sold off quickly. Obviously anyone who would worried.”

“That’s right! Those bastards are to blame.”

“Dammit, have the tycoons and politicians changed in the last few decades?”

“They don’t care about the commoners shedding tears of blood. Those damn bastards! I can’t forgive dogs like them!”

“Stop it!”

Yoo An-gook suddenly shouted.

“Can’t you differentiate between the right time and place? Hyun-woo brought his long-awaited girlfriend and you’re saying things like that? This isn’t the time for it. Can’t you see the Min-sun ssi is uncomfortable?”

“Ah, no I’m fine.”

Cho Min-sun replied with an embarrassed face. Then she lifted her head and laughed.

“I’m not uncomfortable. No, I want to hear more about exactly what happened. I’m interested in things like this.”

Anyone could tell that it was an awkward smile.

Rakunka

Character Information Window			
Name	Ark (R-02788)	Level	115
Species	Human	Occupation	Elim's Heir
Fame	11,230	Adventure	720
Health	2,900 (+90)	Mental Power	250 (+340)
Mana	0	Force	1,825
Strength	280 (+38)	Agility	345 (+41)
Stamina	465 (+18)	Wisdom	40 (+13)
Intelligence	280 (+68)	Luck	55 (+8)
* Title			
Cleaning Foreman (Agility + 3)			
Ignorant Destroyer (Wisdom -10, Strength +7, Stamina +7)			
Beltana's Hero (Strength, Agility, Stamina, Wisdom, Intelligence, Luck +3)			
Athamas' Hero (Strength, Agility, Stamina, Wisdom, Intelligence, Luck +5)			
Mediator (Wisdom, Intelligence +15)			

* Contribution: Galactic Federation 19,520, Aschulat 500

* Affiliation: Dark Eden (CEO)

*Body Coating: Survivor

+ Environmental adaptation increases by 50% due to the Survivor coating.

+ The Survivor coating reduces the drop rate of Satiety by 30%.

+ The Survivor coating will reduce fall damage by 50%.

+The 'Clairvoyance' effect of the Survivor coating is applied.

“Hrmm.....”

Ark scratched his head. When he returned to S-20 from Amara he had been level 107. But now he was level 115. He had gained 6 levels from the surrounding hunting ground as well as the chaotic users. It wasn't necessary to talk about how profitable the chaotic hunting was. There was a 100% chance to get equipment. He also gained more experience than hunting monsters. He sold the spoils reaped from S-20 and gained 20 bonus stats as well. His fame and federation contribution also increased because he killed criminals. Except for the 1000 Adventure Points that he used to raise his agent rating, everything else had increased. And these changes would be a pleasure for any user.

But right now the details of the information window didn't register in Ark's eyes. It was because of yesterday. The date with Irina that he had been waiting for! Yesterday the two of them finally went on a date. The problem was that the result was '?'.

.....The beginning was good. The appointments had overlapped so Irina ended up meeting the rehabilitation members but the atmosphere was more sociable than expected. The atmosphere was encouraging when they arrived at the Taek Mountain region. She had found out that he was the director of Global Exos and that he owned a piece of land. It was a strange conversation for men and women who haven't met before to be having. And Irina was surprised but wasn't offended. There was just one problem. Later talk emerged about the Taek real estate slump. Since then Irina had a determined, sometimes angry expression on her face.

'I don't know what that look means.'

It was a date yet talk about real estate problems emerged. A woman who understood the situation would feel bad about it. Ark thought that was the cause at first. However Irina wanted them to explain even more. She actively participated in talk of the cause of the real estate slump and the victims affected. But sometimes she would seem angry.

'Perhaps Irina also bought land in the Taek Mountains?'

He contemplated that thought. However Irina didn't seem to be aware of the situation until after they explained it. Plus Irina had to pay her mother's hospital bills so Ark couldn't imagine her having enough money to buy a piece of land.

'I really don't know. Why did Irina question the situation so much? And what is with the angry expression? Perhaps it is because of me? Maybe she was upset because of the damage I received? I'll be glad if it is like that but.....'

He couldn't ask her. He asked if Irina was in a bad mood on the drive back and she just shook her head. There wasn't lot of conversation on the way back to Seoul. He dropped Irina near her house and the date ended in a weird mood. Since then Ark had been worrying about it.

'Should I call her?'

If he wanted the relationship to progress then he needed to freely call her. However he wouldn't be able to get a sense if anything was wrong during the call. Eventually Ark sent a careful letter.

It was nice to meet you. I hope you are well. I'm sorry you had to meet the hyungs during our first date. I hope you didn't feel discomfort etc.....

Ark wrote a lengthy letter and only received this message as a response.

-I'm sorry.

This was the reason for Ark's '?'. He couldn't understand the meaning of her apology. He wanted to confirm the meaning through a call or another letter. However Ark decided to wait. It would be difficult to discern hidden meaning in letters. It might be nothing but personal circumstances. Ark also knew that he was ignorant in matters of love.

'We will meet again very soon anyway.'

Ark was part of the second task force to investigate the magic circle. And Irina was part of the first team so they would have to meet.

'Yes, I can wait and ask the question then. I also have work to do. The remaining time until then is 3 days! Not including the time required to return to Istana, that is only 2 days! I have to finish this job and meet Irina again!'

"Tori, are we there yet?"

"We will exit warp space soon!"

Tori replied as he operated the dashboard. At the same time, a vortex of light was visible outside the window. It was the phenomenon caused when existing a multidimensional portal created by warp travel. There was a small vibration before the Silver Star exited near a planet that shone like jewels. An eye catching nebula was in front of Ark.

"This is....."

This nebula as why he quickly put the situation in S-20 to order and departed

for space! Ark had received the <Dark Omen> quest from Marquis Martin and the <Investigate the Negative Energy> quest from the Elim's Memory. However that wasn't the only thing Ark needed to do. It wasn't a formal quest but it was a job that he received first. It was to find the 5 Divine Artefacts so that he could become the true Elim's Heir. But Ark hadn't even started yet. The reason was simple. He didn't know where it was.

—A place where 5 planets become one light.

That was the only information Ark had about the Divine Artefacts. The strange clue was probably a test itself. Naturally Ark regularly search through the information sites related to Galaxian. However he was unable to find the answer until.....

“Isn't that from the sailor's song?”

The person who said this was Kaya. Once again, Ark had drawn a lot of users to S-20 for chaotic hunting. They were chaotic hunters. Among them were users were a high reputation and fame. Ark didn't need to try and gain their attention. Ark was already a celebrity in Istana and the sector administrator so some of them came looking for Ark. It would be annoying if they wanted to duel like Kurakan but Ark had no reason to reject the users' attention. The users that came to say hello included the tournament winner who used a spear called Sadain, the controller Park and the Esper Kaya.

‘I should ask them about it.’

He asked them about the phrase left by Xanax and immediately received an answer.

“The sailor's song? What's that?”

“It is a song that the crew of spaceships often sing. I remember the lyrics had something about five stars. Sadain, have you heard it?”

“Yes.”

Sadain nodded his head.

“What are the exact lyrics? I think it contained courage?”

“Memory....courage, dedication, desire and passion, the five stars that will guide you towards a dream.”

Controller Park interrupted with the information.

He was sitting cross legged on his dinosaur shaped autobot.

“The lyrics are about five stars that will lead to one light. The sailors sing this song because the five stars often act as a lighthouse in the galaxy. The nebula gas that covers these five stars and radiates light is the largest and brightest in the galaxy. If joined up with the planet in the center called Rakunka then it will form a cross shape. If an NPC crew ever has their navigational system break down then they can use that cross as a guide.”

“Ah I was going to say the cross.”

Kaya nodded and sent a pouting look to Park.

“Sheesh, this guy is so smug despite never catching a monster himself.....”

“People who use guns and swords in the age of flying ships are idiots. And do you think it is easy to create and control autobots? You would never be able to do it.”

“Don’t play around. Have you forgotten what an Esper is? I can change your DNA and turn you into an amoeba.”

“My autobots would’ve killed you before that happened.”

“What? Do you want to try it?”

“When will chaotic hunting be finished?”

Sadain muttered with a tired expression as he watched the arguing Kaya and Park. The three users had known each other before. However they weren’t on good terms and kept on arguing every time they met. However they

acknowledged each other's skills and formed a party once they realized the chaotic users were organized. In this event they were the party that hunted the highest number of chaotic users. Anyway!

‘Oh my god! The answer to the clue was that simple!’

Ark felt like he had been hit in the head. In fact Ark had also heard the sailor's song. Tori had often sung that song when repairing the Silver Star after they escaped from Amara. However his pitch and tempo were messed up so Ark didn't think anything of the lyrics that came out of his mouth. But it was the clue to the whereabouts of the Divine Artefact!

‘The five star nebula gas that looks like a cross. It fit perfectly with the clue left behind by Xanax. It is there. The planets linking the cross up is the place Xanax was talking about!’

This was the reason he asked Marquis Martin for time. He couldn't promise to come back in time to join the investigation team.

‘I want to find it before then if possible.’

He hurriedly cleaned up S-20 and sailed 20 hours towards the cross.

“It must be here!”

His guess turned into certainty. In the centre of the cross was a planet. The 5 planets connected by nebula gas that emitted blue light. The only thing visible from a distance was the light of the cross shape.

“Okay. Prepare to enter the planet!”

“But there are 5 of them. Which one should we enter?”

There was no need to worry about this.

-I will leave a mark for you in the deep centre.

This was the final part of the clue left by Xanax.

“Of course it will be the central planet.”

Ark smiled and replied. The red planet in the centre was larger than the other four. It might seem like a big ball but once he entered the planet then endless land stretched in front of him. However Xanax wrote that a marker was left for the successor.

‘The beginning of Xanax’ clue led to this planet. Then the marker shouldn’t be something small. If I pull the Silver Star back then I should be able to identify the marker. If I explore the planet then it shouldn’t take more than one day.’

No, it didn’t even take an hour. He entered the planet Rakunka in the centre. He used the Silver Star’s exploration equipment to scan the ground and discovered a triangular object covered in a red substance. It was a pyramid, the symbol of the Murat.

‘I discovered the right destination!’

“Tori, land the Silver Star next to that pyramid!”

“Understood!”

Tori replied vigorously and lowered the ship.

Pepeng! Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

The ship suddenly shook and a red message flashed on the monitor.

-You have received enemy fire!

<The durability of Silver Star’s shield has decreased to 92%>

“E-enemy fire?”

“Hyung-nim, over there!”

Ark turned his head at Tori’s squeal and stiffened. Hundreds of unidentified lights were flying towards the Silver Star.

The centre of the space frontier, Elysium.

Elysium was an artificial planet constructed in the early stages of the pioneering age and contains 70% of the galaxy's businesses. However there was a separate reason why it was referred to as the core of the space frontier.

The Space Council. The Council was an institute founded by the companies in order to get rid of unnecessary damage from the competition between the 3 powers. Their members came from influential and active companies so its power was on par with the 3 powers! In fact, they could be called the government in the space frontier. Elysium that contained the Council naturally became the centre of the frontier and thousands of ships travelled through it a day.

In the Elysium Council's Square.

"Sob sob sob sob!"

"Impossible! You can't do this!"

"We're screwed! This will turn us into beggars!"

Three men were in the OTL stance and shedding tears.

"Jackpot.....the jackpot was right in front of me....."

The men crying tears of blood were Ferguson and his younger brothers A and B. Not long ago Ferguson had appeared on the game exclusive news as the user ranked number 18. But Ferguson wasn't satisfied. He needed to ride the momentum and enter the top 10! And he found a way.

'The tungsten mine!'

They had found it by accident when anchored on an asteroid. Ferguson had explored the asteroid and discovered that it contained a large tungsten vein.

‘If I start development then I’ll be sitting on a money cushion!’

Ferguson sensed that this was the chance of a lifetime. The one who first discovered untapped natural resources would be the owner. They just needed to register with the Council and they could monopolize the mining rights for years. But it wasn’t enough to say that ‘here is some underground resources.’ They needed to accurately report the figures in order to apply with the Council. If they were other users then they would begin the investigation immediately.

‘But.....’

Ferguson was prudent. He spend a considerable amount of time gathering information about the exact reserves of mineral resources. The area with the lode was infested with monster. It took a significant amount of time to handle the monsters as well as scan the lode. The thing he had to be most careful of were other pioneers, not monsters! He made sure to scan the surroundings when fighting the monsters. It was like advertising that there were good underground resources in the area. It wouldn’t matter if it was a large planet but this was an asteroid so there was a high chance of being spotted by pioneers and attacked. So Ferguson warped straight to Elysium!

-You have secured the exclusive investigation rights to asteroid E-2038.

<Merchant’s Soul will have the exclusive right to explore asteroid E-2038 for the next week. If other pioneers violate the sanctioned area than they will receive the Council’s sanction>

He secured the exclusive investigation rights. He gained the right to investigate a certain area for a period of time. Of course it wasn’t for free. A considerable fee was required depending on the scope and duration. He paid 2,000 gold for it.

‘But that is chump change if I get my hands on the tungsten mine. Now I can

investigate the asteroid for a week without any pioneer interfering. No one can disturb me! And if I register with the Council after securing the information then I'll be rich!'

However it wasn't that easy to investigate the reserves. Ferguson found the habitat of a giant monster called the Kraken while investigating the asteroid. The Kraken was a giant space monster that would attack ships that neared it. But Ferguson wouldn't let the Kraken stop his plan for a rosy future. Ferguson hired dozens of mercenaries to defeat the Kraken in a fierce battle and was able to complete the survey after defeating it.

"Now I just need to register it with the Council and it will be a happy ending!"

It was shortly afterwards that the problem occurred. While they were warping to Elysium. All of a sudden young brother A who was in charge of steering burst out with confusion.

"Hyung-nim, there is a distortion in our warp orbit! Space interference! Another ship is forcing its way through the warp trajectory that we set!"

"What? That's a violation of the laws of sailing! Those dumb bastards....."

Ferguson was yelling when he flinched and closed his mouth.

Ku ku ku kung! Chwajijjik!

The area distorted and several spaceships appeared. He didn't know their identity. However he knew what they were. It was a UFO without the mark of an agent or a recognition number! Those guys could only be one thing.

"S-space pirates!"

"Hyung-nim, they've started firing!"

Dozens of ray guns were firing at them. Once again, Ferguson was part of Galaxian's top 50 rankings! That wasn't possible with the users' skills alone. This was the space frontier so the attack power of the ship was also

important in case of situations like this. A large part of why Ferguson rose to rank 18 was due to his ship. However there were 4 pirate ships!

“It is impossible to deal with them no matter how much firepower we have! Use photon movement after escaping from warp space!”

“Impossible! We can’t outrun them!”

Pepepepeng!

In the end Ferguson’s ship was smashed by the space pirates. Fortunately Ferguson’s ship was insured. If the ship met with an unforeseen accident or assault then the information would immediately be sent to the insurance company. If he wasn’t doing anything illegal then he could receive compensation. However it wasn’t 100%. He could only get back 80% of the ship price. He also wouldn’t receive any compensation for the cargo loaded on the ship. The damage he incurred was 4,000 gold!

.....Thus far it was okay.

‘I can recoup all this if I get my hands on the tungsten mine!’

He headed to Elysium as soon as he resurrected.....

“The tungsten mine rights for E-2038 has already been registered.”

The Council employee replied. Ferguson felt like the sky was falling down.

“N-no way! I had the exclusive investigation rights! The investigation period hasn’t ended yet so how can another pioneer register for the rights of the mine? Something must be wrong!”

“We received all the data required.”

“That is impossible! We have E-2038’s proprietary investigation survey!”

“But you didn’t submit the data first.”

“That.....”

“Hyung-nim, perhaps?”

Then younger brother B interrupted with an uneasy tone.

“Perhaps the mercenaries registered it after being attacked by the space pirates. If the space pirates are with them.....”

Ferguson felt cold as he heard those words. In fact, he had a few unanswered questions from this incident. The spaceship was moving hundreds of light years so it was almost impossible to interrupt it. He couldn't understand how another agent could register the information for E-2038 in the meantime. It took Ferguson only 2 days to revive at a nearby hive and arrive in Elysium. Even if another pioneer knew the information about the tungsten mine, it would be impossible for them to scan the asteroid in only 2 days. Especially since Ferguson still had the exclusive investigation rights. Then he could only consider one answer.

‘One of the mercenaries I hired stashed the information!’

Then they had the space pirates interrupt Ferguson on the way to Elysium. While Ferguson had waited to resurrect, they had registered the details first. Ferguson shouted in a voice that seemed to spout fire.

“This is their ploy! It is all so that they could register the information for E-2038 first! They sold the information to the space pirates! Please cancel the registration!”

“The evidence?”

“Isn't the fact that they don't have the exclusive investigation rights evidence?”

“The agent who registered for E-2038 said that he bought the information from a sailor. Even if there are some doubts, the Council isn't a law enforcement agency. You're a pioneer should you should know it. Anything that happens in the space frontier is the liability of the party involved. It isn't a problem even if they bought the information from space pirates. They might not have the exclusive investigation rights but they registered in the normal

way. Therefore it isn't possible to cancel it."

He only received a cold reply. The cornered Ferguson immediately went to find the agent who registered for it. However the answer of the bar staff was no different from the Council employee. They paid 30,000 gold to a sailor in order to obtain the information about the underground resources. Then Ferguson looked around Elysium for the sailor who sold the information. However that sailor was involved with space pirates. A guy like that wouldn't remain in Elysium. Ferguson also knew that much.

However he couldn't give up. According to the information he found, the tungsten mine was worth 100,000 gold. Even if he gave a 50% share to investors, he would still secure an income of 50,000 gold. All that had flown away. It was similar to a winning lottery ticket being snatched on the way to claim it. How could he give up?

But he searched through Elysium for a fortnight but couldn't find any traces of the sailor. That person had already run away. An endless universe stretched out in front of Elysium. It was impossible for Ferguson to find the sailor. He had to admit it.

"Hyung-nim, what will we do?"

Sibling A asked while crying. But Ferguson couldn't think of a good idea.

"I don't know."

"Should we return to New World?"

"What? New World?"

"Yes, we might've suffered in New World but it wasn't like this. And we still have a position there. We might've disposed of our assets to help in Galaxian but our characters still remain. So instead....."

"Idiot!"

Ferguson shouted with a frown. Sibling B's cheeks turned red after

Ferguson's shout.

“Have you already forgotten? The reason why we left that place and entered the galaxy? That guy! It is because of that guy! We came here to show that guy. But now you want to go back? I won't! I rather die in this universe then serve under him again!”

“But.....”

“It's impossible! I can't endure it. If you want to go back then you can! You guys.....you two are my siblings! But I'm not going back! I'm going to stay here and succeed. And I'll show that guy. What a great user I am!”

“Hyung-nim!”

Sibling B's eyes were dyed red. Then Ferguson placed a hand on B's shoulder and nodded.

“Let's start again. It is still too early to give up. We might've lost E-2038 but we still have our spaceship and strongest equipment. My name is quite well known on the space frontier so I can find decent jobs. We will raise the necessary funds to enter the frontier again. We can do it!”

“Waaaaah! Hyung-nim!”

Tears poured out the swollen eyes of A and B as they hugged Ferguson. Ferguson also said with a teary expression

“Sob! Those bastards.....yes, I will start again. An opportunity will come if I don't give up. That's one thing I learnt from him. We can do anything he can. Because he isn't here to bother us.”

Ferguson said firmly.

-A new message has arrived.

The Nympe vibrated and a new message came up. A smile spread on

Ferguson's mouth as he confirmed the message.

“That opportunity might've come earlier than I thought.”

Pepeng! Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

-You have received enemy fire!

<The durability of Silver Star's shield has decreased to 78%>

-You have received enemy fire!

<The durability of Silver Star's shield has decreased to 52%>

The red message kept on continuously popping up.

“What is this? Such a thing.....”

Ark looked out the window with confused eyes. A red substance welled up out of the ground like a mini volcano. Rays of light were being fired at the Silver Star from the crater of the volcano.

“Silver Star's turret! Auto fire and attack that crater!”

Kwa kwa kwa kwa! Kwa kwa kwa kwa!

Energy shells were fired from the wings on both sides of the Silver Star. The crater melted as it was hit with dozens of shells. He didn't know what it was but it wasn't impervious to attacks. However there were approximately 100 red craters in the earth! The sky was literally covered with the lights that it fired. Furthermore the firepower of the lights wasn't a joke. The durability of the Silver Star's shield instantly went down to 50%. It wouldn't take a long

time for the Silver Star to be shot down. The problem wouldn't be settled with destroying a few craters.

“Hyung-nim, landing is impossible in this state!”

“You idiot! I already know that!”

Ark shouted as he bit his lip.

‘Dammit, I was caught off guard. I wasn't careful when entering the atmosphere!’

The situation was more serious than it seemed. A considerable amount of energy and momentum were required to head back into space after entering the atmosphere. They had entered the atmosphere immediately after warping so the Silver Star didn't have a lot of power left. It would take some time for the fuel rods mounted on the Silver Star to recharge. However he wouldn't be able to hold out until then.

‘I can use photon movement.....’

Photon movement was different from warp navigation. The ship seemed to disappear but it was actually moving at a rate close to the speed of light. And right now the sky was filled with light rays!

‘If I attempt photon movement then there is no guarantee how many light rays the ship will collide with. Furthermore the damage will be amplified if damage is received in that accelerated state. There is a possibility the ship will crash if hit by the ray. Then there is only one way left!’

“Tori, get out of the way! I will fly!”

Ark pushed Tori away and sat in the cockpit. Ark had immediately released the Chaff when the surprise attack first occurred. Chaff was a defense item to avoid the heat guided missiles. However the light showed no reaction to the Chaff.

‘It isn't a guided missile!’

That was his only hope to get out of this situation.

‘If all of those rays were guided missiles then I would be lacking Chaff. But they aren’t missiles so I can avoid them. I can’t exist the atmosphere immediately but it is impossible for the craters to cover the entire planet. I need to avoid the lights and find an area without them!’

“Hold on tight! We’re descending!”

Ark shouted as he pulled the joystick. The Silver Star flew down towards the red ground. Large rays of light were being fired up. It would be suicide to cross the sky covered in that light. Thus flying low was the answer! If he stuck close to the ground then he would avoid hundreds of those lights. He flew down until the ship was only 10 metres from the ground.

“W-what is going on?”

A dreadful situation was developing outside the window. Something welled up from the red earth as soon as the Silver Star descended. It was a spider-like monster! It wasn’t just one. The area that the Silver Star was passing had so many crawling out that it was like the whole area was covered with them! And it entered the ground again once the Silver Star passed.

Kwa kwa kwa kwang, kwa kwa kwa kwang!

Then the ship shook again. A light ray had hit them when he had looked away for a moment.

“Hyung-nim!”

“Shut up! I need to concentrate!”

Ark shouted while grinding his teeth together.

‘I also played a flight simulation game in the past. There is no reason why I can’t avoid the light rays if they aren’t guided missiles!’

Ark hunched over the control level and focused his attention. He moved the Silver Star up and down, left and right as he kept on flying and avoiding the

attacks. He flew by dozens of light rays. However Ark also had a limit.

Kwa kwa kwa kwang, kwa kwa kwa kwang!

-You have received enemy fire!

<The durability of Silver Star's shield has decreased to 48%>

-You have received enemy fire!

<The durability of Silver Star's shield has decreased to 32%>

The red warning message appeared on the monitor. There was no need to confirm it one by one. He already knew the shield didn't have a lot of durability left. If he took his eyes off the radar for even a moment then he would be hit by a light. He focused every nerve of his body on flying.

“Hyung-nim, over there! A desert!”

A desert caught his eye. Ark noticed the desert wasn't covered in the red substance.

‘There! I can survive if I reach that area!’

It was like Ark expected. He managed to escape the pouring lights by entering the desert. But he still couldn't be relieved. The Silver Star's shield only had 10% durability left. He had escaped from the crisis but Ark flew a few more kilometres just in case. He sighed with relief as he landed the Silver Star and checked it. Luckily there wasn't any large damage. Several exterior walls were scorched and dented but the functionality wasn't impacted.

“What was that?”

Tori asked. Ark also wanted to know the answer to that question.

“I don’t know either. But.....”

It was clear this adventure wouldn’t be as easy as he thought. The pyramid was the symbol of the Murat. There was a 99% chance that Xanax had hidden a Divine Artefact here However, the Silver Star had landed hundreds of kilometres away from the pyramid. Meanwhile that land was covered in a red substance. It was filled with the craters that attacked the Silver Star.

‘Dammit, the pyramid had to be here of all places.....’

.....In fact, it was natural if he thought about it. This was a game. If dangers existed then it was created for users. There was no reason for an area that users would visit to be free of monsters. It meant there had to be a way to defeat it. Ark thought it as highly likely that the pyramid contained the key.

‘But I can’t enter that place even if the Silver Star’s shield recovers. Yet I can’t return to S-20 now. It can’t be helped. I need to learn the identity of the red substance first.’

“Tori, wait for me by the Silver Star.”

Just as Ark was saying this.

“Don’t move!”

Something sharp jabbed him in the back. Ark’s face warped strangely.

“What is this?”

God's Messenger

“Pioneer.....”

The old man said with an unpleasant expression.

“It has been a long time since I’ve heard that word.”

Shortly after landing the Silver Star on Rakunka’s desert. Ark’s group had been surrounded by dozens of warriors before he could grasp the situation. The group were riding camels and pointed a sword at Ark. Ark recognized who they were with one glance. Some planets with undeveloped civilization still had savages as the natives of the planet. Rakunka was one such planet.

-Rakunka-

It is the centre planet in a cross constellation located in the eastern part of the galaxy. The planets forming the cross are surrounded with nebula gas that could be observed from anywhere in the galaxy.

Early on pioneers were fascinated by the light and visited Rakunka but only found a desert planet. They also didn’t find any prominent resources. In addition, the indigenous people called the Kusan clan declared that they wouldn’t join any of the 3 powers and would maintain their civilization. It was excluded from the airspace of the 3 powers so there isn’t much information about it.

Ark didn’t come here without any preparation. After meeting with Marquis Martin in Tatuine, he stopped by the library and looked up information about the cross constellation that Kaya and Park mentioned. That was why Ark became careless. The planet wasn’t worth being developed so it had become one of the worthless, marginalized planets in the galaxy. The indigenous population also turned away pioneers a long time ago so they were still like savages. Therefore Ark thought he didn’t need to bring the Royal

Guards. There was still a lot of work to do in S-20 so he saw no reason to reduce the number of personnel. But the Silver Star had been attacked as soon as he arrived. He had barely escaped and now he was surrounded by the locals. It was indeed a series of unfortunate events.....

‘They probably aren’t involved in the attack received by the red substance. Or else they would’ve attacked without any warning I need to converse with them to check it.’

Ark determined and surrendered. The indigenous people brought him to their chief, an old man called Barakin. But Barakin’s reaction wasn’t that favourable.

“Pioneer is a word unwelcome to us. We live peacefully for a long time when people who called themselves pioneers suddenly invaded our ancestral lands like a bunch of hyenas.

“They are no different from thieves!”

“They must be dealt with in accordance with the precepts!”

Barakin’s men murmured in rough voices. Then Barakin looked at Ark again.

“We don’t know anything about extra-terrestrial civilizations. But the pioneers haven’t come here for nearly 100 years. I don’t know what you expect but there is nothing here. We also don’t welcome pioneers. I’m giving you a chance so return to where you came from.”

“I can’t do that.”

“This isn’t a request.”

Barakin said with a threatening expression. It was a look that indicated he would use force if necessary.

“I don’t mean to refuse. You might’ve seen it but I was attacked by a bunch of unidentified lights when I first arrived. Therefore the ship I came on is damaged and will need time to repair.”

Of course it was a lie. It was true that the Silver Star was damaged but that was only the shield and the exterior wall. The damage wasn't enough to stop the Silver Star from being able to fly. It was just a lie to buy time. The Kusan were an undeveloped species so Ark believed they wouldn't know anything about the state of his spaceship. At least that's what Ark thought.....

“We're not stupid.”

Barakin's eyes narrowed with anger.

“It was a long time ago but a lot of pioneers congregated here. They left many machine parts behind. Do you think we have no idea about machines? We maintained this civilization for hundreds of years due to our respect for our ancestors, not because of a lack of knowledge. We might've stayed away from civilization but we know your words are a lie.”

Ark felt like he had been slapped. However he couldn't say that it wasn't a lie.

“Ah, no! That is.....”

“There is no need to hear anymore!”

Barakin jumped up and shouted.

“If you're lying then you must have some ulterior motives! I will say it once again. Leave here right now. If you refuse then you will die!”

“That damn pioneer!”

“Hik! Hyung-nim!”

Tori shrieked as the warriors pulled out their swords in unison.

“Hyung-nim, this is a really big deal. We should go back like the elder said. You know where the pyramid is so can't you return later?”

‘This hamster didn't notice.....’

Wouldn't leaving now just confirm that he was telling a lie? Despite Ark's

worries, that wasn't the part that Barakin reacted to.

"The pyramid?"

Barakin looked at Ark and asked.

"Your purpose if the Murat temple?"

"M-Murat?"

"It is unmistakable."

Barakin frowned at Ark's question. It was then followed by anger. Clearly he was feeling some strong emotion.

"Yes, that was your purpose? Hah, I almost forgot. The type of people pioneers were. They selfishly came to this land and plundered the Murat temple for sacred relics. Hundreds of our ancestors died trying to stop the thieves! Now a greedy pioneer has once again come to rob the temple? If you don't die then I won't be able to face my ancestors! Kill them!"

"Ugh! Let's quickly leave!"

Tori screamed. That hamster! This happened because of him.....however not wasn't the time to take care of Tori.

"Kill the thieves!"

The Kusan warriors raised their swords and rushed forward at the chief's command. There were 50 Kusan warriors riding camels! He wasn't sure what their skills were but their numbers alone was overwhelming. Then something popped into Ark's head.

"I'm the Murat's Elim!"

Ark frantically shouted. Barakin had called the pyramid a temple. Then he recalled something the Elim's Memory said. There was a period before the 3 powers explored indiscriminately through the galaxy. The galaxy had first been pioneered by the Murat, Indus, Potamia and Oritious. But their

pioneering differed from the 3 powers. While the 3 powers explored the galaxy to monopolize the resources, the 4 races had focused on developing savage civilizations. That didn't mean they taught races that used stone axes to suddenly use a gun. A sudden change would be too confusing.

The 4 races helped the indigenous peoples' civilizations develop in the right step. Therefore they were like a myth to the natives. The natives thought flooding when there was rain was natural but they taught them how to prevent floods. They also learnt how to predict climate changes as well as new construction techniques. Thanks to that, the natives revered them as gods. That's why Barakin called the pyramid a temple.

'The fact that the pyramid is on Rakunka means that the Murat helped develop their civilization. And Xanax also came here to hide a Divine Artefact. Then they would also know about the existence of the Elim. They worship the Murat as gods and the Elim is an agent of the gods.'

Ark's guess was correct.

"Stop!"

Barakin turned around and shouted. He stared at Ark with incredulous eyes.

"You said that you are the Murat's Elim?"

"That's right."

"Can you prove that?"

"That....."

He had evidence. The character information window stated his occupation as 'Elim's Heir.' However he couldn't show the character information window to NPCs. His only method of proof was to bring Barakin on the Silver Star to the Elim's Sanctua In the end Ark confessed the truth.

"I'll be honest. There hasn't been an Elim for hundreds of years. I happened to become the Elim's heir through chance. That's why I came to

Rakunka. The last generation of Murat Elim was called Xanax. But he disappeared with 5 Divine Artefacts a long time ago. He hid it to prepare for the time his successor would appear in the galaxy. The first place his clue led me to was Rakunka.”

“Xanax.....”

“Chief-nim, those words.....”

A warrior looked at him with a hopeful expression and Barakin nodded.

“Your words are similar to those passed down in the clan. But I can’t trust that you are the Murat’s Elim with just that.”

“So what will make you believe me?”

“I heard that the Murat’s Elim was invincible in battle. Even if you don’t have the Divine Artefacts, you should still have the skills of the Elim. Ellain!”

“Yes Chief-nim!”

A man with tanned skin and giving off a tough expression replied.

“Ellain is the Kusan’s best warrior. If you are really the Elim’s heir then you should easily overpower the Kusan’s best warrior. If you can’t show me a Divine Artefact then you’ll have to convince me with your skills. Ellain, the opponent is calling himself an invincible warrior. If he is trying to trick us with the God’s name then kill him with your own hands! Don’t worry about anything else!”

“Understood!”

Ellain jumped down from the camel while pulling out his sword. The situation had flowed into an unexpected direction but he thought it was rather fortunate. If Barakin ignored Ark’s words then he would’ve had to fight 50 warriors. But now it was a 1 on 1 fight. That alone had decreased the burden. Even more.....

‘I’m Ark!’

Ark grabbed the handle of his lightsaber. Ark might not be an invincible warrior but he had confidence in a 1 on 1 fight.

‘If I can prove it then there is no reason to refuse to fight.’

.....That’s what he thought.....

‘Huk! W-what is this?’

Ark was confused the next moment. Ellain had narrowed the distance the moment Ark had pulled out his lightsaber. The sword attacks were so rapid that he couldn’t even see it! Ark panicked at the unexpected speed and raised his sword but the blade had already hit him a few times. Ellain didn’t just have fast speed.

-You have received a critical hit!

A large amount of his health went down! Judging by the damage done, Ellain had to be at least level 150!

‘This opponent isn’t an ordinary NPC!’

He could barely see the attacks let alone block it. He also had no room to counterattack. It wasn’t simply that Ellain’s sword was fast. Ark realized something after the fight with Ellain started. This place was a desert. In other words, it had a sandy ground. His foot sank in the sand every time he stepped so his movements weren’t as agile as normal. On the other hand, Ellain had trained in the desert so his movements were steady.

‘I have to get accustomed to the sand first!’

Ark’s movements started changing. The basic step of all martial arts was footwork. It was the same for sword mastery. If his foot wasn’t properly positioned then his centre of balance would be off and swinging the sword would be difficult. This was the reason Ark couldn’t properly counter Ellain’s

attacks. The special desert terrain gave a penalty to Ark and an advantage to Ellain. However.....

Kakak! Kakang! Kakakaka!

The situation changed once the number of attacks increased. At first Ark could only block and sometimes counterattack but eventually they were almost at the same level. This was because Ark's footwork had changed. Ark seemed to be gliding across the sand!

'Swamp Walking!'

This skill was what created the change! The swamp and desert were opposite environments but the method of movement didn't change. Ark used the method of Swamp Walking and distributed the weight of his body evenly. The swamp and desert was the same if he knew the trick to the movement. No, he was able to move even quicker. The sand was hard compared to the swamp.

'Now I've caught the feeling. Then.....'

"Sonic Sword!"

His lightsaber fell at a tremendous speed! Ellain hurriedly lifted his sword but it was ineffective. Sonic Sword was a skill that attacked the opponent with a shock wave! It wasn't a technique that could be blocked with a sword. The shock wave pushed Ellain back and he stumbled.

"Now shall I begin?"

Ark laughed as he waved his sword from side to side. He glided across the sand towards Ellain. The moment the lightsaber was about to strike Ellain!

"Ack, welcome alter ego!"

Ellain's body suddenly increased by 4. Ark's sword cut one of the bodies and it disappeared like smoke. Meanwhile the remaining three Ellain surrounded him and charged at Ark.

‘Alter egos? A ninja like skill.....’

He was confused by the unexpected skill but that only lasted a moment.

‘There is only one body. I just have to take care of them at once!’

The technique that surfaced in Ark’s head was Galaxy Sword! When he first learnt it, Galaxy Sword was a skill that used Force to manifest dozens of swords in front of him. It was Ark’s strongest skill so he steadily used it until it reached intermediate level.

-The rating of your occupational skill ‘Galaxy Sword’ has risen!

Galaxy Sword (Intermediate, Active): Through steady training, you can handle the sword that produces Galaxy Sword more skillfully. Now you can control the trajectory of the flying swords to generate a vortex around the body. The vortex will tear into any enemy in the vicinity.

Force: 250

The swords would swirl around his body. He had already seen the effect in S-20 when he fought against a bunch of chaotic users. The Galaxy Sword tore into dozens of chaotic users rushing at him. Let alone the illusionary alter egos!

“Khafra Fencing 3rd style!”

“Wait a minute! Both of you stop!”

The shout was heard just as Ark was about to activate his skills. Barakin who had been watching with a serious expression suddenly jumped up. He rushed towards Ark and Ellain and stopped them from fighting. Then Barakin came up to Ark and asked.

“Where did you learn the technique you just used?”

“The technique I just used?”

“Yes, the one just now. Your sword didn’t touch him but Ellain was pushed back several metres. Where did you learn a skill like that?”

Ark now knew what skill Barakin was talking about.

“That is Sonic Sword. I learnt the technique from the Elim Xanax.”

“I thought you said you never met Xanax?”

“I haven’t met him. Like I said before, Xanax prepared a few things for his heir before he went missing. I learnt Sonic Sword from one of the clues he left behind. But this isn’t an Elim technique. Xanax learnt it from a crew member he travelled with.”

“Do you name the name of the warrior?”

He couldn’t remember the exact name. However Xanax’ journal was still saved on his Nymphé.

-The gun techniques and Sword Mastery learnt from the experienced crew were especially useful on the expedition. The gun and sword techniques places focus on mental power.....

He had learnt Sonic Sword after reading the last part of the logbook. Ark searched through the Nymphé and answered without thinking.

“I think it was Asuldan.”

“A-Asuldan!”

The Kusan screamed in unison. Why were they more surprised by the name Asuldan than the Elim Xanax? Ark’s expression was bewildered because of their unexpected response. Barakin made a strange gesture and the Kusan knelt down while holding out their swords.

“Barakin, the 43rd Chief of the Kusan Clan has received God’s messenger!”

Roaaaaar!

A loud sound was heard in the darkness. A huge presence seemed to make the entire darkness shake. The space devil with eight legs and many tentacles was one of the strongest predators in the universe. The devil grabbed and ate its prey using the tentacles and could grow to over level 200. The devil was shaking its body in incredible pain. It was because of a small existence that it had only considered prey.

“Now let’s bring this to an end. I can no longer learn anything from you.”

The man spat out and approached with a red lightsaber. The devil instinctively wielded 10 of its tentacles. However it was pointless. The tentacles flew through the air and cracked against rocks but it never touched his body. And the devil became bloody the moment the distance was narrowed.

“I told you, there is no more for me to learn.”

The man wearing red armour curled his lips.

“Dragon Fury!”

A stream of red lines continuously flowed out. Finally the devil’s body was divided in half and black blood gushed out. Several other men approached him from behind.

“You finally caught the devil. I honestly wouldn’t have believed it if I hadn’t seen it directly. It was killed by just one person. No matter how big the galaxy is, Captain is probably the only one who can accomplish his feat.”

“It is just a monster so it isn’t difficult once the patterns are identified.”

The man in the red armour said with an expression that didn’t show any interest.

“Hunting monsters on the frontier isn’t fun and this time it is a bit lacking. When will I meet something interesting?”

“Captain-nim is addicted to war.”

The man muttered while complaining. Then the man in red armour scratched his head and said.

“It’s not good when there’s no war. The last full length battle was Athamas.....hum, I can’t accept that. The skills.....”

-A new message has arrived.

The Nymphe vibrated and a new message came up. A smile spread on the man’s face as he smiled.

“Aha! Finally my turn has come.”

The man growled. The Rama in the red armour was someone Ark knew as the Red Slaughterer.

“I’m really sorry.”

Barakin said as he bowed. Barakin’s attitude had changed 180 degrees after the battle with Ellain. He wasn’t the only one. The other 50 Kusan warriors had jumped off the camels and fell flat in front of Ark. And the cautiously watched as Ark was brought back to the Kusan village on a camel.

“This is like a beggar’s haunt.”

Tori muttered as he looked around the village. His trembling attitude had changed after Ark’s battle with Ellain. He wanted to say something after seeing the Kusan’s expressions but Ark’s impression wasn’t that different. The puddle in the middle of the desert couldn’t even be called an oasis. The Kusan village was just a bunch of old tents packed closely together. But Ark had no interest in other people’s living situation. Ark wanted to know why their attitude changed so much after hearing the name

of Xanax' crew member. Barakin's explanation.....

“Asuldan was the strongest warrior at the time when the Kusan were prospering. The records state that Asuldan followed the Murat's Elim out to the universe after he visited Rakunka. Now Ark-nim learnt and is using Asuldan's skill. This is proof that Ark-nim is the Elim's Heir, God's messenger. I apologize for acting like that to God's messenger.”

“It is understandable.”

He couldn't say otherwise. Anyway, this was a misunderstanding like the Kusan stated. Xanax must've hidden the Divine Artefact with a species that worshipped the Murat as gods. Naturally the Divine Artefact should be easy to obtain. Just as Ark was trying to ask this point.

“What? This twisted lizard? Are you telling me to eat this?”

Tori complained as he lifted a lizard skewer.

“Didn't you call Hyung-nim God's messenger? Yet what is with this reception? Shouldn't you have something better? Like sunflower seeds for example! I'd like that!”

“You little.....”

“I'm ashamed.”

Ark had been glaring angrily at Tori. Then Barakin sighed as he looked around the old tents.

“As you saw, Rakunka is mostly a desert planet. Naturally a single drop of water is more precious than anything else. Despite our numerous efforts, the desertification kept on proceeding so the Kusan were in danger of extinction. Then we were saved by the Murat. The Great Gods caused a divine miracle that prevented the desertification and pulled up water from deep underground as well as teaching us how to live.”

Thus the Murat became the Kusan's Gods. Of course, the arrival of pioneers

on Rakunka meant that knew the Murat were just an alien species with a more advanced civilization. But the Murat saved the clan from the brink of destruction so they still revered them.

“I want to ask you something.”

“I know.”

Barakin nodded like he already guessed.

“You probably want to use why we’re in this predicament if we had the Murat’s help.”

That wasn’t what he wanted to ask. Ark had been about to ask about the red substance that covered the pyramid and attacked the Silver Star. But that ended up being the final destination.

“It is due to the Myutal.”

“Myutal?”

“Yes, those monsters appeared decades ago after a meteorite fell on Rakunka. From then on they started to attack the peaceful Kusan villages.”

The Myutal monsters that had appeared with the meteorite started to attack the Kusan! Of course the Kusan mobilized all their warriors to fight against the Myutal. However they couldn’t stop the Myutal. The Myutal destroyed villages one by one and widened the area of capture land with a red substance.

‘Red substance.....that was the crater area that attacked the Silver Star. Then the creatures that emerged when I flew close to the ground are the Myutal.’

“So the red substance that is covering the pyramid.....?”

“That’s why the Kusan is like this.”

Barakin emphasized in a serious voice. The Murat had left the pyramid behind for the Kusan. However it wasn’t merely symbolic. The pyramid was

the source of the miracle that pulled water from deep underground.

‘The reality of the Murat ruins left behind on Rakunka.....’

It was the facility to terraform Rakunka. And that was the place where the meteorite fell. Naturally the first place the Myutal attacked was the pyramid. The Myutal swarmed out of the meteorite, wiped out the Kusan defending it and took over the pyramid in minutes. Since then the pyramid stopped functioning. The water that had been flowing on Rakunka gradually stopped and the vegetation and people started dying of thirst. And the Kusan started dying along with Rakunka. The result was that out of hundreds and thousands of Kusan, only a few hundred were left after dying of thirst, hunger and the Myutal’s attacks. The Kusan only had one hope left!

“The only method left is to regain the temple.”

“Huh? But even if the temple could fertilize the environment, that doesn’t mean it will solve the underlying problem.”

“That’s not right.”

Barakin shook his head. And Ellain pulled out a chunk of crystal.

“This is something the Murat left for our Kusan ancestors. According to the Murat, this crystal will awaken the sleeping power of the temple.”

‘That’s right. Such a thing?’

Ark was able to roughly understand the situation. The Kusan couldn’t imagine it but many alien species existed throughout the galaxy. If those alien species invaded Rakunka then there was no way the Kusan could fend them off. A hidden strength inside the pyramid. It was probably a weapon that the Murat left behind. The pyramid left behind doubled as a terraforming device as well as a defensive weapon against alien attack. However the meteorite fell right next to the pyramid so the Kusan didn’t have time to charge the weapon.

“We fought for many years!”

Barakin emphasized in a serious voice.

“For dozens of years we fought to take back the temple from the Myutal. However we never succeeded. We only sacrificed countless brave warriors. Meanwhile the oasis supplying our water gradually turned to a small puddle. And this is the remaining Kusan village. There are only 50 warriors left.”

“Are the Myutal that strong?”

Ark who had been listening silently asked with a serious look. The Kusan were a dying clan after the pyramid was taken away by aliens that suddenly appeared. Ark was also involved in this problem. Ark made it clear that the reason he visited Rakunka was to find the Divine Artefact that Xanax hid. And Ark knew that the most likely location of the Divine Artefact was the temple. The Kusan couldn't take back the temple. It meant Ark couldn't enter the pyramid.

‘Rakunka is a planet where science hasn't developed yet. But Ellain's skills were at a considerably high standard. The other Kusan warriors can't be weak either. If those warriors couldn't recapture the shrine after fighting for decades.....’

The red substance covering the pyramid flashed through Ark's mind. Countless rays of light had attacked the Silver Star. He didn't know what the light was but it clearly came from the Myutal. If it wasn't for the lights then he could simply handle the monsters on the ground with the Silver Star's weapons. However it was even more difficult to approach from the air. He had to enter from the ground yet the Kusan had been trying that for decades. How could Ark penetrate through the Myutal's nest? While Ark was busy thinking.

“The Kusan aren't worried about the Myutal.”

“Huh? But.....”

“The Myutal invaded and they’re currently occupying an area hundreds of kilometres wide. But they aren’t a match for the Kusan warriors no matter their numbers. The Kusan had reached the front of the pyramid many times throughout the last decades. The reason we failed to enter the temple was because some other creatures called the Umu helped them.”

“Umu? What’s that?”

“We don’t know their identity. The only thing we know is that those guys are controlling the Myutal. And our weapons just pass through them. Those guys are like ghosts so our weapons can’t even touch them. It is because of them that we’ve failed to enter the temple.”

To make matters worse! It became even more difficult to enter the pyramid. But then Barakin suddenly raised his head and said.

“Now we have a way to compete with the Umu.”

“You know how to fight them? How?”

“God’s messenger!”

Barakin bowed again and said.

“The technique you learnt from Asuldan! It was designed to destroy evil presences. If this technique is used then we will be able to cut the Umu. But the warriors that knew this technique were wiped out from the first Myutal attack. The Kusan had been trying to reproduce this technique but no one has succeeded. But now God’s messenger used that technique! It is the will of God! God’s messenger, this Barakin is begging you! Please teach us how to use this technique!”

Barakin lowered his head to the ground and yelled.

-You have received a request from the chief of the Kusan on Rakunka to teach them a technique.

In Galaxian there is a system where users can teach NPC techniques. Of course, learning these techniques depends on the level, special qualities and occupation of the NPC.

In addition, the user needs knowledge to teach the skill so it has to be at least intermediate level. If you succeed in teaching the skill then your degree of proficiency will increase.

‘Teaching a technique?’

Ark looked dumbly at the information window. He knew that users could learn skills from NPCs but he never heard that users could teach NPCs. Therefore he never thought about it. But it wasn’t impossible when he thought about it. Once again, in Galaxian NPCs could also grow like users. Their level as well as skills. The Royal Guards had learnt new skills from training with the Silver Hand. That meant NPCs could learn from other NPCs. Then users should also be able to teach NPCs. And when he thought about it, Ark already had experience with it although he hadn’t noticed at the time.

‘Yes, I taught the Royal Guards how to dig.’

It was a rediscovering of the NPC training system that he never imagined! This was one more way to increase the growth of the Royal Guards. But first he had to teach Sonic Sword to the Kusan warriors. He knew Sonic Sword but trying to enter a pyramid occupied by Myutal was too risky to do alone. And there was no reason for him to go in alone. Didn’t Ark have 50 subordinates as the God’s messenger?

‘The problem is time!’

Right now he only had 3 days left to join the investigation team. When taking into account the travel time, he only had 2 days to find the Divine Artefact. He had to teach Sonic Sword as well as retake the pyramid in that time! Ark came up with a crazy idea and jumped up.

“Please be prepared. My training will be tough.”

There was no time!

‘Pant pant pant, this is.....’

Ark grasped his sword with trembling hands.

-You have agreed to the technique initiation.

A relevant information window will be created. If all the training challenged in the information window is completed then the NPC will have a chance to learn the skill.

A few hours ago.

He accepted and an information window with training menus flashed. The process of teaching Sonic Sword was indeed terrifying. The first challenge was to swing the sword 5,000 times! There were 10 different training menus for raising the basic strength. Normally it would take a week to complete the training menu.

‘But this needs to be finished in a day!’

Ark made up his mind and started pushing the Kusan warriors. However there were no strong arguments against it.

“The existence of the clan is at stake!”

“God’s messenger is teaching us directly!”

The warriors desired to learn the technique so they could recapture the pyramid! And God’s messenger was teaching them the skill directly. The Kusan warriors were literally desperate and threw themselves into the training menu. It was good up to there.....

‘Eh? Why aren’t they receiving the skill despite all the training?’

Ark was puzzled after they had already been training for 12 hours.

-The training to raise the basic strength has been completed.

Now it is time for the full-fledge technical training. In technical training you will have to demonstrate the technique directly.

Demonstrate Sonic Sword 10,000 times to your disciples.

This exercise can be repeated infinitely. If the skill isn’t generated after the training is repeated then repeating it will increase the probability of learning the skill. But if it is repeated dozens of times and the skill isn’t generated then please give up.

The NPC doesn’t have a talent for the skill.

Ark’s mouth gaped open as the message appeared. Finally all part of the user → NPC technique initiation was revealed! It wasn’t just hard for the NPC. The user had to be strong as well. But he had no other choice. He swung the sword 10,000 times in the heat of the desert And that wasn’t all. Ark sweated for 3 hours and completed the 10,000 demonstrations. However the ‘!’ only appeared on top of Ellain and 5 other warriors’ heads. This meant the rest didn’t understand the technique!

“I-I have to do this again?”

His hands had become numb after wielding the sword for 3 hours. But the Kusan warriors had completed a week’s training menu in only 8 hours. That was the power of faith! The Kusan warriors’ eyes were burning with determination despite their tattered bodies. Ark couldn’t give up in front of them. So he started again. He swung the sword 10,000 times in the heat of the desert!

‘Dammit! The reason for the skill proficiency rising.....it is well-founded. Of

course it would increase when the same behaviour is repeated thousands of times!’

Temple

“Phew.....”

Ark wiped his sweat and sighed. NPC technique initiation. This system really caught out a person. He could understand demonstrating a skill movement in order to teach it. But he needed to do it 10,000 times. In addition, the technique initiation wasn't 100% completed even when he finished the demonstration. The acquisition system depended on the NPC's qualities and attributes. Fortunately Ark only needed to do it 3 times. He had to repeat the same behaviour 30,000 times under the scorching heat. He also obtained something.

-You have received enlightenment in [Sonic Sword] and the skill proficiency has reached Advanced (Lv. 3).

Sonic Sword has reached the advanced level! But originally Sonic Sword had already passed 90% of the intermediate stage. He swung the sword 30,000 times and the proficiency only increased by 10%. He couldn't really call it compensation. However he hadn't done the training in order to raise the skill level. It was to teach the Kusan warriors Sonic Sword! And it was possible to teach 40 Kusan warriors after his efforts.

‘If possible I would like all the warriors to learn Sonic Sword but.....’

There was no time. The basic fitness training had taken 12 hours. Ark had demonstrated it 3 times so that was another 12 hours. It had already been a day. He needed to join the investigation team in 2 days. If he took into account the time required to reach Istana, Ark actually only had 16 hours left.

‘It is impossible to battle in this state!’

They had been training for 24 hours so the warriors didn't even have strength left to lift their swords. It was suicide to lead the warriors when they were in

that state.

‘My mind is in a rush but I can’t charge in blindly. There is only one chance to enter the pyramid with the Kusan warriors. They need rest in order to be in their best condition.’

Thus they slept for the recommended 8 hours.....

“God’s messenger-nim, please. The 50 people here are the remaining warriors of the Kusan clan. If we fail to enter the temple this time than the rest of the Kusan will be destroyed. The lives of thousands of people are people entrusted to God’s messenger-nim!”

<Operation to Recapture the Temple>

You have met Chief Barakin, the leader of the Kusan clan that is native to Rakunka. Decades ago, the space monsters called Myutal appeared along with a fallen meteorite and drove the Kusan to extinction after capturing the pyramid. You have decided to help them retake the pyramid.

Difficulty: B+

A quest was registered after Barakin’s words! The 50 Kusan warriors crossed the desert until they reached the beginning of the red earth that was the habitat of the Myutal. But Ark was still tired. It wasn’t from training for a day but because of the heat. Rakunka didn’t have a sun. However the nebula gas surrounding it meant the temperature on Rakunka steadily rose. The Murat pyramid had intercepted the heat for a long time but it hadn’t been working for decades so now the heat was no joke. It was to the extent that even the Kusan found it difficult.

“Messenger-nim, are you alright?”

“I’m okay. Are all the preparations finished?”

“Yes, you can give the command at any time.”

Ellain nodded and replied. Behind him were the Kusan warriors riding camels. They crossed the desert that was sizzling like an oven but the though Kusan warriors showed no signs of it! They looked dependable but the exact number of enemies was unknown. It was clear that the Myutal hiding in the earth would be dozens of times their number.

‘I have to reduce the burden as much as possible.’

“Tori, are you ready?”

-Yes, *Hyung-nim*.

“Okay. Then let’s get started!”

Ark raised his head and exclaimed.

Wuuuuong! Wiiiiii!

There was a warrior and a huge object rose up from behind the warriors. The object reflecting light in all directions was the Silver Star! The Silver Star rose 10 metres before flying towards the red earth. At the same time, red lights shot up from all over the ground. It was the Myutal’s weapons that had attacked Ark as soon as he entered Rakunka. Tori stuck close to the ground but was still hit several times by the light. As expected, it was impossible to reach the pyramid from the sky. It would be shot down before the ship could even land.

‘The Kusan fought the Myutal dozens of times and never saw the red light being shot out. That means it must be an anti-aircraft weapon. It is fortunate that the monsters aren’t carrying anti-aircraft guns themselves.’

Despite that, the reason why he had the Silver Star head to the red earth.....

‘It came out! The Myutal!’

Monsters were rising from the ground near the Silver Star.

‘This place is closest to the pyramid but there is still a distance of 80 kilometres. It doesn’t matter how weak the opponent is. Having 50 Kusan

warriors killing hundreds of monsters for 80 kilometres will be tough. The success or failure of this mission will depend on how long the troops survive. I can't afford to lose even one of them!'

That as the purpose of the Silver Star. To ease the burden of Ark and the Kusan warriors.

Kwa kwa kwa kwa! Kwa kwa kwa kwa!

Particle shells poured out from the Silver Star towards the Myutal. The Myutal's body shattered once it was hit.

"That is God's ship, the Silver Star!"

"God's messenger! He truly is the Murat's Elim!"

Ellain and the warriors looked at the Silver Star with worshipful gazes. Pioneers might've visited Rakunka but that was more than 100 years ago. Barakin was the oldest and he had never seen a ship before. The grandeur of the Silver Star really made it seem like God's ship in their eyes. Although it was correct that the Silver Star was a Murat ship.

"Now!"

Ark looked back at the Kusan warriors and yelled.

"Now while they're all concentrated on the Silver Star! Plunge into the red earth! Kusan warriors, raise you swords! Now is the time to reclaim the temple and repay your ancestors' deaths. For the future of the Kusan!"

"For the future of the Kusan!"

"God's messenger is leading us!"

"For the honour and future of the Kusan!"

Ellain and the warriors pulled out their swords as they cried in unison. At the same time, Ark raised his lightsaber above his head.

"Charge!"

“Waaahhhhhhhh!”

Ark dashed forward on his air board. 50 Kusan warriors riding camels followed behind him as they entered the red earth. However the Myutal didn't attack them. The Myutal were chasing the Silver Star that was flying around and attacking. There were remnants of Myutal destroyed by the Silver Star scattered around. In some cases the Myutal were still breathing.....

Ku ku ku ku! Snap! Snap!

They were crushed by a camel's foot. Ark and the Kusan warriors steadily advanced. It was no different from crossing a wasteland. The situation changed once they crossed 30 kilometres. They could relax because of the Silver Star. However there were more red lights the deeper they entered so it would eventually be shot down. The Silver Star's support only lasted up to there.

–Hyung-nim, the Silver Star's shield only has 20% durability left.

“Leave before it is too late!”

–Yes!

Kuwaaaang!

Tori replied and the Silver Star flew upwards. The lights from the crater stopped once the ship left the atmosphere. Now there was only Ark and the Kusan warriors left.

Kikikiki! Kikikiki! Kikikiki!

Ark's group had proceeded through the centre while the Myutal had been lured away. Now the Silver Star had disappeared so the Myutal were heading towards them.

“Prepare for a collision!”

Ark shouted while moving his hand in a complicated pattern. The last day he spent in the Kusan village had been really tough. However the Kusan

warriors weren't the only ones to grow during that time. Ark had also obtained something. He wasn't talking about Sonic Sword's 10% proficiency. Ark had obtained two things from the village. One of them was the greeting of the Kusan. Barakin had made some strange hand motions when he first recognized Ark as God's messenger. Since then Ark had seen the Kusan repeat the action many times. He was curious so he asked Barakin for the answer.

"They are hand gestures meant for blessings. The Murat handed it down to us and sometimes exhausted people would jump up energized after receiving the blessing. Since then the Kusan uses it as a gesture of respect for the opponent as well as a greeting."

Ark had a sudden thought.

"Does it have a name? Is there a name for this behaviour?"

"We call it Kuon."

"Kuon....."

Then Ark started learning the hand motions. Of course he didn't want to use it as a greeting. The Murat was the ones who passed down that hand motion. And Ark's guess turned into certainty when he made the gesture. The reason for Ark's behaviour.

"Come out, Shire!"

He added the Shire to the hand motion! When he moved his hand in the complicated gesture taught to him, a character was engraved in the light. Once the character was completed, it was crushed into fine pieces like sand and absorbed in the bodies of the Kusan warriors. That's right. The gesture used for blessing was a Murat rune!

"The character carved is called Kuon!"

-A new skill (Common Occupation
☆☆☆☆☆) has been learnt.

Rune Carving- Kuon (User, Passive): the runes used by the Murat have the ability to extract the potential of the photon life form Shire. Therefore the Shire can store the memory of the runes. The Shire rune Kuon is the symbol of Isis who was worshipped as the goddess of life. If the Kuon rune is used then a strong vitality and willpower will be imparted to nearby allies.

<All allies within 100 metres will have their health and defense increased by 20% for 20 minutes. However the same effect can't be stacked>

Mana consumption: 150

This was the effort of the Kuon rune! It was a buff that increased health and defense by 20%. The buff showed significant effects when granted to allies. But this wasn't the only effect on the Kusan.

“Ohhh! This is the Murat's blessings?”

“God is blessing us. It means the gods are watching us!”

“Kusan warriors, don't be afraid! We have God's messenger who inherited the will of the Murat!”

“This blessing is evidence that this crusade is meant to be!

Apart from health and defense, their courage also soared! They weren't scared because they were with the gods!

Kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa!

The moment the Kusan warriors collided with the Myutal. There was a ringing sound and the bodies of the Myutal flew in all directions. The power of the Kusan warriors was more than Ark expected. He only saw it for a brief moment but the warriors possessed similar strength to Ellain. Indeed, they

were the warriors that survived countless battles with the Myutal. In other words, they were the strongest warriors! On the other hand, the Myutal was only a level 50 monster. They were no match against the Kusan warriors in combat.

“Hot Air Sword!”

“Desert Wolf’s Fang!”

“Welcome to the alter ego! Warrior’s Blade!”

The Kusan warriors overwhelmingly pushed the Myutal back. And the Myutal’s health dropped to the bottom once there was an engagement.

“Khafra Fencing 3rd style! Galaxy Sword!”

Dozens of swords swept through the battlefield like a storm! Tens of dozens of Myutal had already died. Then a black air current swelled around the Myutal. Red eyes flashed from inside the tornado.

“The Umu!”

The Umus were the ones controlling the Myutal! They were the cause of the Kusan’s despair as they were impervious to swords. The Umu had no doubt in their abilities and steadily rushed towards the Kusan warriors. However the Kusan warriors were different now.

“Show them the results of our training with God’s messenger!”

“Concentrate all our attacks on the Umu!”

“Sonic Sword!”

They used the Sonic Sword that Ark had taught them! Dozens of swords caused shockwaves that tore through the bodies of the Umu. The bodies that previously couldn’t be wounded were torn apart. The Umu screamed from the unimaginable blow and retreated. Then an attack shot towards the Umu again.

“Sonic Sword!”

It was from the master who taught the Kusan warriors. Ark’s Sonic Sword had reached the advanced stage. Naturally his attack was on a different dimension from the Kusan warriors. The Umu’s body that had already become ragged was cut in half.

-Roaaaaaar!

The Umu gave a scream of pain and disappeared.

“The Umu was defeated!”

“Now there is nothing that can stop us!”

“Advance! Break through the Myutal and reclaim the temple!”

The Kusan warriors shouted as their morale increased and they moved forward. And.....their crusade started.

‘This can’t continue.’

Ark realized that he needed to change his tactics. The Kusan warriors were being overwhelmed by the Myutal and Umu. They had learnt a technique that could handle their enemies after decades of fighting. Therefore they rapidly advanced in the beginning. They literally crushed the Myutal as they moved forward. But they soon hit their limits.

Kikikiki! Kikikiki! Kikikiki!

They killed Myutal again and again without any breaks. They expended a lot of strength rushing through the Myutal. All they had to do was charge but the numbers couldn’t be ignored when there were hundreds of Myutal. Therefore the Kusan warriors’ health went down to 40~50%. The problem was that there was no healer to help them recover their health.

‘Without a healer the only way to recover health is to rest.’

But Ark had no time for that.

-Time remaining: 7 hours
42 minutes.

He had set a timer before he entered the red earth. It was the amount of time he had to enter the pyramid, find the Divine Artefact and join the 2nd investigation team. However it had been 16 hours and they’ve only marched 50 kilometres. The Silver Star helped them the first 30 kilometres so they actually only fought for 20 kilometres. And the remaining distance to the pyramid was 30 kilometres. They hadn’t even handled half of the Myutal yet.

‘If it continues like this then I won’t be able to join the investigation team on time. The problem is that there isn’t a solution.’

The red land was the Myutal’s area. They needed to handle the hundreds of Myutal hiding in this area. If they took a rest then there would be surprise attacks from the Myutal. 10 warriors had already died because of these surprised attacks. The combat power of the warriors decreased so the marching speed also slowed.

‘We’re advancing through the centre. Their numbers will increase even further as we approach the pyramid. In this situation, we might be wiped out before we even reach the pyramid.’

There was only one way left. It was to reduce the time required to recover their health. In other words, he needed to reduce the damage taken by the Kusan warriors. The answer he came up with was surprisingly simple. Monsters were afraid of enemies with RPG weapons. They would be the first ones attacked even if someone else attacked the monster first. And this aggro number also applied to buffs and heals. It was natural. If a person was healed then couldn’t that person kill the monster? Therefore a buff or heal would raise the aggro value to 3~4 times that of an attack. The problem

was that this was dangerous for the healer. That's why tanker classes learned skills like 'Taunt' that raised their aggro value. Anyway.....

This was the method Ark came up with.

“Come out, Shire! Rune Carving Kuon!”

It was the buff skill that he learnt with the Kuon rune! In the past he had used the buff when the battle was about to start. It was a skill that lasted 30 minutes so he only needed to use it 2~3 times in a fight. Most fights ended within 30 minutes so there was no need for the effect to stack. However.....

“Come out, Shire! Rune Carving Kuon! Kuon! Kuon!”

Ark invoked the Kuon rune many times during a battle. One use consumed 150 mana and it also raised his aggro figure! When the Kusan warriors attacked 2~3 times, the opponent's hostility instantly went to them. But the opponents changed targets to Ark once he used Kuon a few times. It reduced the burden on the Kusan warriors. Of course, Ark was at risk of being attacked so he got on the air board.

‘I'm faster than the Myutal on the air board. I can outrun these guys!’

Bbok bbok bbok bbok! Bbok bbok bbok bbok!

-<Your health has been
restored by 2>

Any damage he received was solved by the Charenjok's token. Ark flew around on the air board's maximum speed while attacking the Myutal with his lightsaber.

“Khafra Fencing 3rd style! Galaxy Sword!”

Sometimes he would use Galaxy Sword and the Myutal in front of him were blown away. Flesh scattered as the flying swords cut through the Myutal!

“Now it is bleeding!”

Kwa kwa kwa kwang, kwa kwa kwa kwang!

A column of flame gushed out from the area that the air board passed. Ark dropped grenades that caused an explosion. He also continued pouring out the buffs. The Kusan took care of the Myutal while they were chasing Ark. This tactic reduced the amount of damage the Kusan warriors took. And this damage reduction increased their travelling speed. However it was still tight considering the remaining time left. No, he couldn't afford to slow down the pace!

“Come on, let's go! Hurry up!”

He spurred an even faster advancement!

-Time remaining: 5 hours
30 minutes.

“The Umu!”

“We have to deal with them! Attack!”

“Sonic Sword! Sonic Sword!”

Pepeng! Pepeng! Pepeng!

The Umu disappeared as they were torn apart!

-Time remaining: 4 hours
21 minutes.

“Those guys are flocking again!”

“Come out, Shire! Rune Carving Kuon! Kuon! Kuon!”

“These guys are gathering around the God's messenger!”

“Hurry up! Protect God's messenger!”

“Oh, no! Everyone back off! Start the bombardment!”

Kwa kwa kwa kwa! Kwa kwa kwa kwa! Kwa kwa kwa kwa!

The Myutal were engulfed in flames as the air board kept on moving!

-Your level has risen!

His level was also increasing.

“Cough! I can’t move any longer. Leave me and just continue.”

“You fool! You are a warrior of the Kusan clan. This battle concerns the future of the Kusan. If you can move even one finger then you have to fight until the end. Don’t say weak words like that.”

“Ugh, understood! I’ll be a shield for my colleagues even if I need to die!”

“That is a Kusan warrior!”

Sometimes a touching drama like this would occur while advancing.

-Time remaining: 1 hour 38 minutes.

“There it is!”

“Here is our God, the Murat’s temple!”

Ark’s group had finally reached the front of the pyramid. Ellain and the Kusan warriors stared at the pyramid with thrilled eyes. The road to reach here was indeed challenging. Ark had heard the endless screams of battle. And a forced march! Ark had dragged the warriors here through hundreds of Umu and Myutal but dozens of warriors had been sacrificed. They had set off with 50 people but only 20 of them arrived at the pyramid. More than half of the warriors had lost their lives. However the temple was a sacred place for the Kusan warriors. A considerable cost was paid but they had finally reached the front of the sacred place after losing against the Myutal for decades. The warriors who reached the destination shed tears of joy. But Ark didn’t cry. Unlike the warriors, Ark only cared about the pyramid because the

Divine Artefact was hidden there. That wasn't the only reason why Ark wasn't thrilled.

‘.....There is something strange.’

Ark looked around with a frown. According to Barakin, the meteorite had fallen right next to the pyramid. In fact, next to the pyramid was a huge crate with a meteorite lodged in it. In other words, this was the sacred place of the Kusan and the Myutal. Naturally Ark had expected there to be the most Myutal here. His expectations had been right when coming here. The number of Myutal increased as they got closer to the pyramid. However the Myutal suddenly stopped talking when they were 1 kilometre away from the pyramid.

“Do you think it is over?”

“Certainly.....”

Ellain nodded his head. But it was inevitable for the Kusan to think like that.

“This is the Holy Land. Surely the Myutal wouldn't be able to access it?”

The reason was due to their faith. They treated Ark as God's messenger and the Kusan warriors couldn't help being optimistic. They couldn't believe they reached here and kept on looking at each other absent-mindedly.

“Yes, we'll know once we enter. Ellain.”

“Yes, everybody get down!”

Ellain commanded as he got off the camel. He took out the crystal in front of the door and the crystal started vibrating while rising. It was at that moment.

Ku ku ku ku! Ku ku ku ku!

Kikikiki! Kikikiki! Kikikiki!

Myutal came from everywhere the moment the door started opening! Ark and the Kusan warriors flinched and turned their heads. A countless number of

Myutal could be seen! In addition, a huge number of Umu appeared with the Myutal. No, it wasn't only in the nearby area. They Myutal started crawling out of the red substance that covered the pyramid. It was to the extent that the pyramid turned black from the Myutal that covered it.

“W-why are there so many Myutal.....”

Then the Myutal covering the pyramid started moving in unison. The Myutal headed towards Ark's group who got into a battle position.

“Dammit! Hold your formation!”

Ark, Ellain and the Kusan warriors pulled out their swords. Ark was puzzle by what happened next. Apart from the Myutal attacking Ark's group, the others were just flocking towards the pyramid?

‘Are they waiting until the door to the pyramid is opened?’

It was hard to believe but that was the only possible answer. It was the only reason to ignore the enemy in front of the pyramid. No, it was too late to consider such issues. Their only hope was the weapon inside the pyramid. However they would become the Myutal's prey if they occupied the interior of the pyramid.

“Ellain, pyramid!”

Ark rode the air board and rushed to the door. Then 10 Myutal rolled in front of the door. But he had no time to deal with these guys. Ark just increased his weight to the front and the air board sped up even more. And just as he reached those guys.

“Mind Shield!”

-The Mind Shield has been activated.

<A shield with 340 durability will be created

around the body.....>

“Shield Emission!”

He fired another skill before the information window even popped up! It was the combo attack of Mind Shield and Shield Emission! The blue shield covering Ark’s body exploded and fired dozens of fragments everywhere. His lightsaber danced at the same time.

Wiing! Wiiiing! Seokeok! Seokeok!

The Myutal in the trajectory of the lightsaber was cut! The Myutal that was already tattered from Shield Emission became like sliced meat.

“Come out, Shire! Rune Carving, Ikram!”

Ark’s hand drew a brilliant pattern in the air. Then the dog with the head of a Myutal appeared. Ark shouted at Ellain after the hell hound attacked the Myutal.

“Everyone! Don’t bother with the guys on the outside! Stay here and defend! The entrance isn’t wide so you can defend against those bastards!”

“Understood!”

The warriors flocked towards the entrance. Needless to say, there were quite a few warriors injured by the Myutal’s surprise attack. However the warriors were even more determined than before.

“This place is the Kusan’s temple!”

“I won’t let even one Myutal dirty this place!”

The warriors shouted while blocking the entrance with their bodies. Then Ellain threw the crystal to Ark and said.

“Messenger-nim, we will block this place! Messenger-nim should activate the temple! The Kusan clan’s future will depend on you!”

They wanted to defend this place alone! There was no time to argue. Thousands of Myutal were flocking towards the pyramid! Fortunately, the pyramid entrance acted as a barrier so only a few could attack at a time. Now the only way to get out of the situation was to activate the pyramid's defense weapon. And Ark was the fastest on his air board.

“Psychokinesis!”

Ark pulled the crystal towards him. Then he accelerated the air board as soon as he grabbed the crystal. He flew forward and saw two passages each dozens of metres long. One led upwards and the other downwards. Perhaps one passage led to the terraforming device while the other one led to the defense weapon.

‘Dammit, they might be dying.....’

Ark's brain started thinking at a frantic pace. Barakin said that the pyramid pulled up water from deep underground to create an oasis. Therefore the terraforming device should be located at the bottom of the pyramid!

“The defense weapon is at the top!”

Ark flew down the top passageway. And after flying for a while.

“W-what is this?”

Ark burst out with confusion. The end of the passage was just a dead end with a wall! He couldn't see any machines and there was only an Egyptian wall painting. Ark thought he had made a mistake and was about to turn around. Then his eyes caught sight of a hold in the chest of the goddess drawn on the wall.

“Perhaps this is the goddess Isis from the Kuon rune?”

Ark recalled the contents of the information window about the Kuon rune. Isis was the goddess of life. She was the origin of humans and all species in the galaxy.....

“Heart! This crystal must be Isis’ heart!”

Ark flew to the wall and inserted the crystal in Isis. Then the wall split to the sides. A room appeared with a giant pillar in the middle spouting blue light. A geometric pattern appeared and disappeared on the surface of the pillar. But strangely the pillar was covered in a transparent, crystal like object. The moment Ark touched the crystal surrounding the pillar. All of a sudden a humming voice was heard.

-Who are you?

“What? This voice is?”

-Yes, if you are qualified then speak the name of the person who guided you here.

“Guided me here.....Xanax?”

–The seal has been released!

The voice boomed out and something amazing happened. The crystal melted off the pillar and formed a giant golem. Was this the defense weapon left behind by the Murat? The crystal golem looked at Ark and said.

“I will test you in accordance with the pledge!”

A gun was abruptly pointed at him!

Power of God!

‘Pledge? Test?’

It came out of nowhere. Other users would’ve probably rushed back and forth in confusion. But Ark was unaffected. It was abrupt but Ark sensed something the moment he heard the voice. Ark had forgotten for a while but he came to Rakunka to find the Divine Artefact that Xanax hid. And now something that responded to the name Xanax appeared. The conclusion that came from this combination of clues was simple.

‘Is this the 2nd test for Xanax’ successor?’

The atmosphere became like he expected. Perhaps he could get the Divine Artefact after defeating the crystal golem. It was good. It reduced the trouble of him having to search for it. Yet! Yet! Yet!

“Dammit! Now isn’t the time to do this!”

Ark snapped in an angry voice. Right now the Myutal were flocking towards the pyramid. Ellain and the Kusan warriors were currently stopping them but Ark didn’t know how long they could hold out. If they collapsed then the Myutal would enter the pyramid. They would also smash the terraforming machine and defense weapon. Yet now he had to pass a test? But there was no time for questions or answers.

Kwakwang!

The golem’s fist rose and slammed into the ground.

“This foolish golem!”

Ark used Swamp Walking to retreat. The golem had no intention of understanding Ark’s circumstances. Then there was only one way remaining! He had no choice but to defeat the golem and pass the test.

“Okay. Shall we do this?”

Ark took an attack stance with his lightsaber in front of him. He had managed to pass the Sanctuary's training centre test after several attempts. He didn't know the exact identity of the crystal golem but it should be a higher level of difficulty than the training centre. However his real opponent was time. Right now time was the most precious thing to Ark. He couldn't afford to lose even 1 second.

"I need to use my full strength straight away! Armour armament!"

The space distorted and his battle suit appeared! The battle suit wrapped around Ark's body and he shot towards the golem.

Wiing! Wiiing! Pajik! Pajijjik!

The lightsaber moved through the air and cut the golem. Sparks flew from the golem's body as the lightsaber struck it.

"Okay. This should be enough to win!"

Ark showered the golem with attacks. The golem tried to counterattack by hitting with its fist. However the golem's movements were slow. It had tremendous destructive power but that didn't matter if the attacks didn't hit him. Ark used Swamp Walking to move across the shaking floor and hurled relentless attacks. It was an almost one-sided attack!

'I was certain it would be more difficult than the training centre.....maybe I became too strong? I also didn't use the battle suit in the training centre.....that Xanax, he might've made a mistake with the test sequence.'

He had that idea. Then the golem spread its arms opened and rushed forward. So far the movements had been slow thus he couldn't imagine the fast speed of the charge! Ark hurriedly raised his sword at the sudden speed. However he couldn't stop the rush of the crystal golem. Ark received a huge impact and bounced back several metres. At the same time, the golem spread its arms open before slamming them together again.

Jjang!

There was an explosive sound as the two palms hit together. He had managed to barely avoid it but the attack caused sweat to drip down his back. The movement was like catching a fly. If Ark's head had been between those palms then he really would be crushed like a fly. No, he avoided the clapping but it wasn't a favourable situation to him. The golem head-butted him. He took a defensive stance but he still lost 15% health. However Ark was even more confused by the golem's health. He had bombarded the golem with rapid fire attacks and had hit it at least 10 times. Yet the golem had only lost 5% of its health. That meant his unique lightsaber only dealt 0.5% damage with each hit.

‘What? This ridiculous defense?’

Ark noticed the reason afterwards. He avoided the golem's fist and swung his lightsaber!

Snap! Pajijjik!

When the lightsaber hit an enemy, the area turned dark. However the golem's reaction was different. When the lightsaber touched the golem's body, the light diffused and sparks emerged on the surface.

‘Oh my god! This is the reason!’

It wasn't simply a problem of defense. The lightsaber blade was basically a high temperature light. Any light that touched rough glass ended up with a diffuse reflection. It didn't enter properly which was why the damage wasn't high. The golem's body was crystal. Most of the lightsaber was dispersed and the damage decreased. This was the worst opponent to use a lightsaber on!

‘When considering the power of this guy.....’

In fact, there was a reason Ark started with full power apart from the time limit. Ark had to fight through the Myutal in order to reach the pyramid. He wanted to finish this during the time limit so he couldn't afford to take breaks. Thus he tended to only have 60~70% health while advancing. It was

the same when he arrived at the pyramid. Ark only had 70% health left when he advanced inside the pyramid. He had to pass through the Myutal so his health was 60% when he reached the golem. Therefore he decided to use full strength to quickly take care of it.

‘But the lightsaber doesn’t work on this guy!’

Now finishing it quickly was a problem. He only caused 5% damage. On the other hand, he had lost 15% health just from the golem head-butting him.

‘Attacking blindly is meaningless! Even if I can avoid being damaged, defeated him will take a long time. Ellain won’t be able to hold out until then. This can’t continue. I need to find another way!’

Kukung! Kwa kwang! Kukung!

Ark desperately rolled to avoid the golem’s fists. Generally there were two types of monsters. There were ordinary monsters and monsters with a strong resistance to certain attacks. The Umu was one such monster. A general sword wouldn’t be able to harm it. Those sorts of monsters would also be impervious to smash attacks. The Sonic Sword was able to damage it because it targeted the Umu’s weakness. It was imperative that he find the weakness!

‘Crystal, glass, glass.....aha!’

“Fire Eagle P-50!”

A gun sprang out of his bag at Ark’s words.

Snap! Pajijjik!

It was the shotgun that he barely used since obtaining the Heir’s Sword. The golem couldn’t be properly damaged by the lightsaber. Therefore Ark put the sword away and grabbed the Fire Eagle. He avoided the golem’s fist and loaded the bullets!

“Eat this!”

Pepeng! Pepeng! Pepeng!

There was the sound of the Fire Eagle being shot. But there was no hot feeling like when he first used the Fire Eagle. One blow had damaged multiple Sufferers but the damage to the golem was different. The Heir's Sword had twice the damage of the Fire Eagle. It also had the 'push' effect but the large body meant the effect wasn't applied.

'But.....'

Ark wasn't using a normal bullet. It was the Freezing Bullet being fired! This bullet had the effect of slowing down biological tissue. But the opponent was a crystal golem. There was no biological tissue so the effect of the freezing bullet wasn't applied. The only thing that happened was frost forming on the surface of the crystal. However.....

'This should be sufficient.'

"Now it seems to properly frozen."

Buuong! Ark avoided the golem's fist and smiled. He loaded new bullets in the empty magazine and lifted the muzzle again.

"Let's see how solid your body is now! Set Bullets Shooting!"

Cheolkeok! Cheolkeok! Cheolkeok! Pepepeng!

The Fire Eagle started spewing out flames! The flames hit the golem's chest. So far the golem had ignored all attacks from the lightsaber and Fire Eagle but this time it was different. "I-I can't believe this!" The golem clutched his chest and stepped back with confusion. Crystal pieces were crumbling underneath the golem's fingers. This was what Ark had been aiming for. The special effect of the Freezing Bullet wasn't applied to the golem's body but it was frosted. In other words, it was the same effect as putting glass in a freezer. What would happen if boiling water was then poured on it? It would rapidly contract and expand!

This was the principle behind the golem's body breaking. He had shot a Fire Bullet after the Freezing Bullet! The Freezing Bullet and Fire Bullet had the

same effect as putting glass in a freezer and then pouring hot water on it. This was the result. The golem's thick body that hadn't been damaged by the lightsaber and bullets started shattering. 7% of its health also decreased at once.

“In no time.....”

Ark loaded the Freezing Bullet again and laughed.

“I'm going to turn you to powder.”

Pepeng! Pepeng! Pepeng! Pepeng!

Since then the battle became one-sided. Ark avoided the golem's fists and fired the Freezing Bullets. Once the golem's body was covered with frost, he would change to the Fire Bullets and peng! Peng! Peng! Fine parts of the golem's body fell every time and it lost 10% health in 3~4 minutes.

“Not yet!”

The cracked golem rushed towards him. It spread both arms wide open like it wanted to hug Ark. Ark had no intention of letting himself be hugged. The moment the golem tried to hug Ark!

“Welcome to the alter ego!”

Ark's body turned hazy. This was the second skill obtained from the Kusan village! Ellain had used ‘welcome to the alter ego’ during the fight with Ark. Ark liked that technique since he first saw it. He specialized in close combat so he needed something to deceive the enemy's eyes. Of course, it wasn't that easy to get a NPC to teach a player a skill. However the Kusan considered Ark as God's messenger. He also taught them a skill that they lost a long time ago.

Therefore Ark easily learnt the secrets of ‘welcome to the alter ego’ from Ellain. The method of teaching was similar to the one Ark used on the Kusan warriors. Ellain had to demonstrate the skill then Ark had to practice it. This

was why Ark was more tired than the Kusan warriors. While the Kusan warriors had been sleeping for 8 hours after their training, Ark had been learning this skill. It was fortunate that Ark could acquire the skill quickly.

It wasn't because Ark had outstanding talent. Galaxian was a game, so user → NPC transfer of information was much slower than NPC → user. Ark was also able to quickly acquire 'welcome to the alter ego' because he used a similar technique during his New World days. Dozens of footprints appeared on the ground. 'Welcome to the alter ego' was a skill where the user had to step on one footprint after another and it would fail or succeed depending on the completion rate. It was the same method as Dark Dance! Thankfully he only needed to practice for 2 hours.

-A new skill (Common Occupation
☆☆☆☆) has been learnt.

Welcome to the Alter Ego (User, Active): This technique has been handed down through generations of the indigenous people of the underdeveloped planet Rakunka. The Kusan warriors often saw mirages in the desert and created a series of footwork that would make illusions to confuse the enemy. However this technique requires a certain amount of agility (300) to be successful.

<2~4 alter egos can be created. The number of alter egos depends on the success of the footwork>

Mana consumption: 50

Hwakak!

Ark followed the complicated footprints on the ground and created 4 alter egos. One of them were caught in the golem's arms and disappeared. Naturally this was an alter ego. The remaining three scattered in every direction and surrounded the golem. The golem turned its body different ways with confusion.

“18 Barrage!”

Kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa!

Flying fists hit the golem! Cracks had already spread all over the golem’s body thanks to the combo of Freezing Bullet + Fire Bullet. Once the fists of steel started hitting at an incredible speed, chunks of crystal started falling to the ground. And when the 18th fist hit!

Jjajjjajjang!

There was a ringing sound and a thick crack spread across the centre of the golem. It was the end.

“.....The pledge has been completed.”

The golem said in a weak voice.

-Your level has
risen.

-Your level has
risen.

It was a welcome message.

“Phew, now.....”

Ark took off his battle suit and muttered. Then the crystal pieces piled on the ground started melting like liquid. The liquid gathered and changed into a bracelet with many crystals linked together.

“Eh? An item? Then perhaps this is?”

Ark picked up the crystal wristlet.

-Baius Shield Lv. 1 (Artefact)

Item Type: Energy Shield Wearer Restriction: Elim's Heir

Defense: 200 Durability: ∞

Shield Quantity: 5,000/5,000

Thousands of years ago, the Murat created 5 Divine Artefacts for their Elim. This Divine Artefact was created with the special Baius crystal with the nickname 'Stone of Will' and has the same functionality as an energy shield. But this isn't a mere shield. Sometimes it can change into a golem and move independently of the user. Baius is a material that has will so it can change and grow with experience. It can grow into a stronger shield and golem. However, this growth is accomplished by absorbing 50% of the wearer's experience.

<Stamina +20, Resistance to energy weapons +50%>

<Summon Baius Golem (Lv. 1): The Baius Shield will change into a golem when it is summoned. The golem's combat power depends on its level. However, the wearer's mana is required in order to maintain the golem form. In addition, 50% of the wearer's experience will be absorbed by the golem. Mana consumption: 20 every 1 minute>

-You have acquired the
<Baius Shield>

"Divine Artefact!"

Ark's eyes looked shocked. Ark thought that the crystal golem had been placed there by Xanax. However the golem had turned out to be a Divine Artefact. This was a development he hadn't expected. But unlike its name, the Baius Shield's performance actually wasn't that good. The shield only had 200 defense. A shield with 200 defense wouldn't be able to block the enemy's attacks. The shield also had health. Usually a weak bullet decreased a shield by 100~200. If it was a close range attack then sometimes it would

be 1,000 damage. Therefore most level 50 shields had 5,000 shield quantities. If he looked at that value then this Divine Artefact was no different from a level 50 weapon.

‘But this is a growth type item!’

If meant the performance could be steadily upgraded! The shield could also transform into a golem. It might absorb 50% experience but it was similar to growing a pet so he could take that penalty.

‘I’d like to try summoning the golem.....’

Now wasn’t the time to be playing around.

“Defense weapon! Where is the Murat’s defense weapon?”

ARC looked around desperately. But he didn’t see anything except for the pillar.

‘The Murat told the Kusan to use the crystal if there was a crisis. There must be some way to trigger the defense weapon. If that’s the case?’

Ark placed his hand on the pillar. The intricate light patterns then gathered around Ark’s hand. It gathered together to form Murat letters!

-Rakunka’s space weapon ‘Heavenly God’s Fire’ has been started.

The ‘Heavenly God’s Fire’ can have harmful effects on Rakunka’s environment.

Would you like to activate ‘Heavenly God’s Fire?’

This was the contents of the letters after the Nymphe translated it. It was a space weapon that could have harmful effects on the environment. However Rakunka didn’t need environmental protection after the Myutal’s attacks. Weren’t the natives already dying and the atmosphere heating up? There was

no need to worry!

“Activate!”

Ark exclaimed. Then the letters in front of his hand spread around the pillar. It formed a pattern that connected and a circuit was drawn on the surface of the pillar.

Ku ku ku ku! Ku kwa kwa kwa kwa!

There was a vibration and a huge pillar of light flew upwards.

“Pant pant pant!”

“My strength.....ugh!”

Ellain grabbed his arm and stumbled. While Ark had entered the pyramid to call the ‘Power of God,’ Ellain and the Kusan warriors had been fighting the thousands of Myutal flocking to the pyramid. Fortunately the entrance was narrow so only 20 Myutal could attack at once. They could defeat those numbers. However that had its limitations. 10 times, 20 times, 30 times..... more warriors became wounded and died as they killed the Myutal endlessly. The fierce battle had already been ongoing for 10 minutes. However the ‘Power of God’ still hadn’t been activated.

“Maybe the legend is just a legend.....”

Ellain grieved as he looked at his bloody colleagues.

Ku ku ku ku! Ku kwa kwa kwa kwa!

There was a loud noise and the pyramid shook. Ellain and the surviving Kusan warriors then witnessed a miracle. A huge light shot up from the top of the pyramid and the sky turned red like it was angry. And the anger formed red rays that shot towards the ground. The moment the light touched the red earth!

Kikikiki.....pepeng!

There were thousands of Myutal covering the pyramid. All of the Myutal screamed and exploded in unison. It wasn't just the Myutal. The Umu controlling the Myutal and the red substance covering the area also vaporized. However Ellain and the Kusan warriors were unaffected despite being touched by the red light. Only the alien creatures invading Rakunka were burned by the light of the heavens!

“Miracle! It is a miracle of God!”

“Our faith wasn't in vain!”

“Ohh! God is helping us!”

Ellain and the Kusan warriors fell to their knees.

‘This is the nature of God's power?’

The vast stretches of outer space.

Ark looked out the window of the Silver Star. Ark was inside the pyramid so he could read the identity of God's power through the Murat letters. The identity of God's power was the nebula gas Ark was looking at now. No, to be accurate it was the electromagnetic radiation emitted by the nebular gas. The nebular gas of the cross emitted unique electromagnetic waves. The electromagnetic wave was similar to a microwave. The molecules vibrated at a velocity that generated heat. And the light that shot up from the pyramid amplified the electromagnetic waves surrounding Rakunka. This was the identity of the red beams Ellain witnessed. The electromagnetic waves surrounded Rakunka was amplified by hundreds of times like a microwave.

That's why the Myutal and Umu exploded. The body fluids were boiled by a microwave and exploded. However, the Kusan and indigenous flora and fauna of Rakunka had received the radio waves for tens of thousands of years and had developed an immunity to it. The Murat was aware of this and created a weapon using the nature of the nebula gas to create a weapon that

would wipe out alien species. This was the true identity of the ‘Power of God!’

‘But I’m not from the Kusan clan.....’

If he had been outside the pyramid then Ark also would’ve gone BOOM!

‘The Power of God really is merciless. I don’t know if the Murat has good or bad personalities.’

Anyway, the whole situation was organized neatly thanks to that. Once again, the pyramid on Rakunka had two functions. There was the power of destruction with the nebula gas. And there was the power of creation where the terraforming device regulated the electromagnetic waves to pull up water from deep underground. The terraforming facility was also working like the weapon. In the meantime the terraforming device couldn’t receive the necessary energy and had stopped working. Unlike the weapon, the terraforming facility constantly consumed energy and converted the nebular gas to light and heat energy. But the energy supply had been stopped by the red substance covering the pyramid. But the device started working again once the red substance was burned up. The proof was that the small puddle had turned into a large lake when Ark, Ellain and the Kusan warriors returned to the village.

“This is all thanks to Messenger-nim.”

Barakin said in a thrilled voice as he looked at the clear water in the lake. It wasn’t only Barakin. Ark had been treated as God’s messenger before but it was nothing compared to afterwards.

“The great God’s messenger!”

“Glory to God’s messenger!”

The thousands of Kusan bowed down in front of Ark. They treated Ark with reverence like he was a real god. So Ark decided to play the role of God’s messenger.

“Hey Tori, come here.”

“Huh? Why?”

Stay still. Haaayaahh!”

Ark grabbed Tori’s ankles and held him upside down. And small packets of seeds started falling out. Tori was a hamster. During his break in S-20 he had gone around collecting seeds. Those seeds were the ones that fell from Tori. The amount of seeds that fell was at least 1 kilogram.

“Hik! W-what are you doing? That.....”

“Shut up!”

Ark glared at Tori. Then he gathered the seeds and handed them to Barakin.

“These are the seeds of a plant that grows on a planet called Istana. I don’t know if it can grow on Rakunka but these seeds would sprout into leaves. Rakunka might end up having a forest after some time.”

During the Murat days there had been several forests on Rakunka. The terraforming operation meant there were oases all over the place so the Murat grew plants. However the terraforming device stopped working so the plants were depleted of water and the species not immune to the electromagnetic waves were killed. That’s what it meant by the ‘Power of God’ being lethal to the environment. But now the plants could grow again thanks to the oasis. This was the reason he gave them Tori’s seeds. Barakin was appreciative.

“I can’t even express my thanks for disposing of the Myutal and taking back the temple and now you’re doing this favour for us. This is the only way I can repay you. It is a ring that has been passed down through generations of Kusan chiefs. It might be insufficient to pay you back but please accept this.”

His thanks weren’t just empty words.

-Hot Wind Ring (Rare)

Item Type: Ring Wearer Restriction: Level 100

A ring that has been passed down through generations of Kusan chiefs.

This ring contains a rare, special jewel that is created through hot nebula gas. According to the information handed down through the Kusan, this ring has strong fire properties.

<Fire Resistance +30%, Agility +10>

A rare ring! That wasn't the only thing Ark obtained.

"Chief-nim, I want to ask you something."

Ellain approached Barakin after everything was finished. Barakin nodded and said.

"I can already guess what you want to say after seeing your expression when you came back with Messenger-nim. You want to go with Messenger-nim."

"Yes. Until now I've taken pride in the fact that I've been the best warrior of the clan. But I've realized how lacking I am after meeting God's messenger. Of course, I don't dare compare myself to God's messenger but I would like to serve him and learn a bit more."

"I understand."

Barakin sighed and nodded.

"That's probably the same mindset that Asuldan had when he left Rakunka a long time ago. And it is an honour to be able to serve God's messenger. I don't have any right to oppose. If you have Messenger-nim's permission....."

Ellain was a top rated NPC. He wasn't a pioneer but there was no reason for Ark to oppose it. In addition, he had spent 1,000 Adventure points to upgrade

the level of his agent so his number of employees had increased from 15 to 30. He was thankful for another NPC!

-Ellain has joined Dark Eden as an intern.

Name: Ellain (NPC ☆ ☆ ☆)

Occupation: Inspector

Level: 152 Related Skills: Sword mastery, Welcome to the alter ego.....

Thus Ellain joined the staff of Dark Eden.

“Now shall we say goodbye?”

Ark turned and asked. Ellain stared at Rakunka with emotional eyes and nodded.

“Yes, now my home is with Messenger-nim.”

“Sheesh, I hate hearing stuff like this.”

Tori said with a pout.

“Hey you! I want to make this clear. I am a senior. Do you understand?”

“Of course.”

“Ranking is important in Dark Eden. Eh? I’ll be watching.”

Tori concentrated power in his shoulders and said. However Tori hadn’t realized something yet. The ranking of Dark Eden wasn’t determined by the joining order. It was 100% determined by the dictator Ark. Ark had been cheated by Tori and his trust was low so the hamster would always be at the bottom of the pyramid. But Ark let it go for the moment. He had his seeds taken away and was hungry so Ark would allow him a little joy. Now also wasn’t the time to clean up the ranking.

“Tori, take the wheel.”

Ark sat in the captain seat and said.

“Start the Silver Star’s warp navigation. The target is Istana. Depart!”

The Silver Star was wrapped in light and shot through the universe. The destination was the centre of the galactic federation, Istana.

“Huhuhu.”

Ferguson looked around and laughed. 20 pioneers were gathered in a luxury salon. It was obvious from their equipment that they were pioneers who spent some time in the frontier. And Ferguson didn’t look out of place among them. His equipment and battle suit were at a standard worth 10,000 gold! He was also a user ranked 18th in the top 50 user rankings.

“How about it? You guys can see it. Do any of them look stronger than me?”

“Of course not.”

“Hyung-nim is the strongest.”

“Yes, I guess. I’m at a different standard.”

Ferguson nodded with a pleased look at his siblings’ words.

‘At one point I was so worried I almost quit the game.....’

Ferguson felt like the sky had collapsed on him after hearing that his information about the tungsten mine had been stolen. He tried to be strong for his younger brothers but he really felt like quitting the game. But a chance he never considered had fallen into Ferguson’s lap. He had received a message on Elysium. The reason why Ferguson was sitting in a seat reserved for distinguished guests in Tatuine was due to that message.

-The 2nd magic circle

investigation task force.

The message was that Ferguson had been selected for the 2nd investigation task force. He had an agent so he also received the <Dark Omen> quest. But all agents from the 3 powers had received the quest and he was busy with the tungsten mine so he didn't bother with it. Yet now he had a chance to directly join the federation's investigation team.

'The three of us alone won't be able to complete such a huge quest. But it is possible if I'm part of the federation's investigation team. I'll have the support of the federation for all expenses and information will be shared. This is an advantage that other pioneers won't have! And if I complete the quest before the other members of the investigation team.....'

The agents of all 3 powers had received the quest. That meant the reward would be incomparable compared to other quests. This was a chance for Ferguson to escape from being a beggar!

'I need to grasp this chance!'

"By the way, how long do we have to wait for? Didn't the departure time pass already? They gathered busy people in a place like this and now they're making us wait?"

"I talked to the guards and heard that someone hasn't come yet."

"A person hasn't come yet? Then we're waiting for a pioneer? Ha, this makes me feel dirty. This person is making other pioneers wait! What type of bastard is this?"

"That is....."

"Damn, it can't be helped. I don't know who is coming. But I'll show him."

"In the future we'll be members of the same team so be patient. There is no reason to act like this before it has even started."

“I still need to be certain of the pecking order.”

Ferguson replied with an enthusiastic look. Then the door that had been firmly closed opened and two men entered.

“The last team has arrived.”

The person who entered and started talking was Marquis Martin. This meant the guy next to him was the pioneer who made Ferguson wait! Ferguson got up from the couch he was waiting on and approached him. And just as he was about to speak.

“His name is Ark.”

Ferguson froze at Marquis Martin’s ensuing words. His brothers A and B also turned to ice. Brothers A and B withdrew and stuttered.

“Hyung-nim, Ark? Is that right? We didn’t hear wrong?”

“U-unlucky! Hyung-nim, we are still unlucky!”

“Q-quiet! He’ll hear. And how are we unlucky? I told you days ago. ‘He’ isn’t in Galaxian. The face is similar but it is also slightly different. Y-yes, it is impossible to be him.”

“B-but.....”

While Ferguson’s group were busy arguing.

“Please wait a moment.”

The door opened and two men once again entered. Marquis Martin frowned as he looked at them and asked.

“Why is Marquis Jyubel-nim here?”

“Fortunately I’m not too late. One more person is joining the investigation team.”

“Are you talking about the young man next to Marquis-nim?”

“Yes, this is Rapid.”

Marquis Jyubel introduced the blonde youth next to him. However the blond youth, Rapid wasn't even looking at Marquis Martin. His eyes were fixed on Ark standing next to him. Ark was the same as well. Ark stared at Rapid and muttered.

“Hoh, Rapid.....”

“Do you know him?”

Marquis Martin asked as he looked between Jyubel and Rapid. Ark replied.

“No. I don't know that person at all.”

TO BE CONTINUED